

# THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

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## Romola.

### CHAPTER XXVII.

#### THE YOUNG WIFE.



WHILE Tito was hastening across the bridge with the new-bought armour under his mantle, Romola was pacing up and down the old library, thinking of him and longing for his return.

It was but a few fair faces that had not looked forth from windows that day to see the entrance of the French king and his nobles. One of the few was Romola's. She had been present at no festivities since her father had died—died quite suddenly in his chair, three months before.

"Is not Tito coming to write?" he had said, when the bell had long ago sounded the usual hour in the evening. He had not asked before, from dread of a negative; but Romola had seen by his listening

face and restless movements that nothing else was in his mind.

"No, father, he had to go to a supper at the cardinal's: you know he is wanted so much by every one," she answered, in a tone of gentle excuse.

"Ah! then perhaps he will bring some positive word about the library; the cardinal promised last week," said Bardo, apparently pacified by this hope.

He was silent a little while; then, suddenly flushing, he said,—

"I must go on without him, Romola. Get the pen. He has brought me no new text to comment on; but I must say what I want to say about the New Platonists. I shall die and nothing will have been done. Make haste, my Romola."

"I am ready, father," she said, the next minute, holding the pen in her hand.

But there was silence. Romola took no note of this for a little while, accustomed to pauses in dictation; and when at last she looked round inquiringly, there was no change of attitude.

"I am quite ready, father!"

Still Bardo was silent, and his silence was never again broken.

Romola looked back on that hour with some indignation against herself, because even with the first outburst of her sorrow there had mingled the irrepressible thought, "Perhaps my life with Tito will be more perfect now."

For the dream of a triple life with an undivided sum of happiness had not been quite fulfilled. The rainbow-tinted shower of sweets, to have been perfectly typical, should have had some invisible seeds of bitterness mingled with them; the crowned Ariadne, under the snowing roses, had felt more and more the presence of unexpected thorns. It was not Tito's fault, Romola had continually assured herself. He was still all gentleness to her, and to her father also. But it was in the nature of things—she saw it clearly now—it was in the nature of things that no one but herself could go on month after month, and year after year, fulfilling patiently all her father's monotonous exacting demands. Even she, whose sympathy with her father had made all the passion and religion of her young years, had not always been patient, had been inwardly very rebellious. It was true that before their marriage, and even for some time after, Tito had seemed more unwearying than herself; but then, of course, the effort had the ease of novelty. We assume a load with confident readiness, and up to a certain point the growing irksomeness of pressure is tolerable; but at last the desire for relief can no longer be resisted. Romola said to herself that she had been very foolish and ignorant in her girlish time: she was wiser now, and would make no unfair demands on the man to whom she had given her best woman's love and worship. The breath of sadness that still cleaved to her lot while she saw her father month after month sink from elation into new disappointment as Tito gave him less and less of his time, and made bland excuses for not continuing his own share of the joint work—that sadness was no fault of Tito's, she said, but rather of their inevitable destiny. If he stayed less and less with her, why, that was because they could hardly ever be alone. His caresses were no less tender: if she pleaded timidly on any one evening that he should stay with her father instead of going to another engagement which was not peremptory, he excused himself with such charming gaiety, he

seemed to linger about her with such fond playfulness before he could quit her, that she could only feel a little heartache in the midst of her love, and then go to her father and try to soften his vexation and disappointment, while inwardly her imagination was busy trying to see how Tito could be as good as she had thought he was, and yet find it impossible to sacrifice those pleasures of society which were necessarily more vivid to a bright creature like him than to the common run of men. She herself would have liked more gaiety, more admiration: it was true, she gave it up willingly for her father's sake—she would have given up much more than that for the sake even of a slight wish on Tito's part. It was clear that their natures differed widely; but perhaps it was no more than the inherent difference between man and woman, that made her affections more absorbing. If there were any other difference she tried to persuade herself that the inferiority was on her side. Tito was really kinder than she was, better tempered, less proud and resentful; he had no angry retorts, he met all complaints with perfect sweetness; he only escaped as quietly as he could from things that were unpleasant.

It belongs to every large nature, when it is not under the immediate power of some strong unquestioning emotion, to suspect itself, and doubt the truth of its own impressions, conscious of possibilities beyond its own horizon. And Romola was urged to doubt herself the more by the necessity of interpreting her disappointment in her life with Tito, so as to satisfy at once her love and her pride. Disappointment? Yes, there was no other milder word that would tell the truth. Perhaps all women had to suffer the disappointment of ignorant hopes, if she only knew their experience. Still, there had been something peculiar in her lot: her relation to her father had claimed unusual sacrifices from her husband. Tito had once thought that his love would make those sacrifices easy; his love had not been great enough for that. She was not justified in resenting a self-delusion. No! resentment must not rise: all endurance seemed easy to Romola rather than a state of mind in which she would admit to herself that Tito acted unworthily. If she had felt a new heartache, in the solitary hours with her father through the last months of his life, it had been by no inexcusable fault of her husband's; and now—it was a hope that would make its presence felt even in the first moments when her father's place was empty—there was no longer any importunate claim to divide her from Tito; their young lives would flow in one current, and their true marriage would begin.

But the sense of something like guilt towards her father, in a hope that grew out of his death, gave all the more force to the anxiety with which she dwelt on the means of fulfilling his supreme wish. That piety towards his memory was all the atonement she could make now for a thought that seemed akin to joy at his loss. The laborious simple life, pure from vulgar corrupting ambitions, embittered by the frustration of

the dearest hopes, imprisoned at last in total darkness—a long seed-time without a harvest—was at an end now, and all that remained of it besides the tablet in Santa Croce and the unfinished manuscript, long rambling commentary on Tito's text, was the collection of manuscripts and antiquities, fruit of half a century's toil and frugality. The fulfilment of her father's life-long ambition about this library was a sacramental obligation for Romola.

The precious relic was safe from creditors, for when the deficit towards their payment had been ascertained, Bernardo del Nero, though he was far from being among the wealthiest Florentines, had advanced the necessary sum of about a thousand florins—a large sum in those days—accepting a lien on the collection as a security.

"The State will repay me," he had said to Romola, making light of the service which had really cost him some inconvenience. "If the cardinal finds a building, as he seems to say he will, our Signoria may consent to do the rest. I have no children, I can afford the risk."

But within the last ten days all hopes in the Medici had come to an end: and the famous Medicean collections in the Via Larga were themselves in danger of dispersion. French agents had already begun to see that such very fine antique gems as Lorenzo had collected belonged by right to the first nation in Europe; and the Florentine State, which had got possession of the Medicean library, was likely to be glad of a customer for it. With a war to recover Pisa hanging over it, and with the certainty of having to pay large subsidies to the French king, the State was likely to prefer money to manuscripts.

To Romola these grave political changes had gathered their chief interest from their bearing on the fulfilment of her father's wish. She had been brought up in learned seclusion from the interests of actual life, and had been accustomed to think of heroic deeds and great principles as something antithetic to the vulgar present, of the Pnyx and the Forum as something more worthy of attention than the councils of living Florentine men. And now the expulsion of the Medici meant little more for her than the extinction of her best hope about her father's library. The times, she knew, were unpleasant for friends of the Medici, like her godfather and Tito: superstitious shopkeepers, and the stupid rabble, were full of suspicions; but her new keen interest in public events, in the outbreak of war, in the issue of the French king's visit, in the changes that were likely to happen in the State, was kindled solely by the sense of love and duty to her father's memory. All Romola's ardour had been concentrated in her affections. Her father's learning had remained for her a pedantry that was tolerable for his sake; and Tito's more airy brilliant faculty had no attraction for her that was not merged in the deeper sympathies that belong to young love and trust. Romola had had contact with no mind that could stir the larger possibilities of her nature; they lay folded and crushed like embryonic wings, making no element in her consciousness beyond an occasional vague uneasiness.



But this new personal interest of hers in public affairs had made her care at last to understand precisely what influence Fra Girolamo's preaching was likely to have on the turn of events. Changes in the form of the State were talked of, and all she could learn from Tito, whose secretaryship and serviceable talents carried him into the heart of public business, made her only the more eager to fill out her lonely day by going to hear for herself what it was that was just now leading all Florence by the ears. This morning, for the first time, she had been to hear one of the Advent sermons in the Duomo. When Tito had left her, she had formed a sudden resolution, and after visiting the spot where her father was buried in Santa Croce, had walked on to the Duomo. The memory of that last scene with Dino was still vivid within her whenever she recalled it, but it had receded behind the experience and anxieties of her married life. The new sensibilities and questions which it had half awakened in her were quieted again by that subjection to her husband's mind which is felt by every wife who loves her husband with passionate devotedness and full reliance. She remembered the effect of Fra Girolamo's voice and presence on her as a ground for expecting that his sermon might move her in spite of his being a narrow-minded monk. But the sermon did no more than slightly deepen her previous impression, that this fanatical preacher of tribulations was after all a man towards whom it might be possible for her to feel personal regard and reverence. The denunciations and exhortations simply arrested her attention. She felt no terror, no pangs of conscience : it was the roll of distant thunder, that seemed grand, but could not shake her. But when she heard Savonarola invoke martyrdom, she sobbed with the rest : she felt herself penetrated with a new sensation—a strange sympathy with something apart from all the definable interests of her life. It was not altogether unlike the thrill which had accompanied certain rare heroic touches in history and poetry ; but the resemblance was as that between the memory of music, and the sense of being possessed by actual vibrating harmonics.

But that transient emotion, strong as it was, seemed to lie quite outside the inner chamber and sanctuary of her life. She was not thinking of Fra Girolamo now ; she was listening anxiously for the step of her husband. During these three months of their double solitude she had thought of each day as an epoch in which their union might begin to be more perfect. She was conscious of being sometimes a little too sad or too urgent about what concerned her father's memory—a little too critical or coldly silent when Tito narrated the things that were said and done in the world he frequented—a little too hasty in suggesting that by living quite simply as her father had done, they might become rich enough to pay Bernardo del Nero, and reduce the difficulties about the library. It was not possible that Tito could feel so strongly on this last point as she did, and it was asking a great deal from him to give up luxuries for which he really laboured. The next time Tito came home she would be careful to suppress all those promptings that seemed to isolate her from

him. Romola was labouring, as every loving woman must, to subdue her nature to her husband's. The great need of her heart compelled her to strangle, with desperate resolution, every rising impulse of suspicion, pride, and resentment; she felt equal to any self-infliction that would save her from ceasing to love. That would have been like the hideous nightmare in which the world had seemed to break away all round her, and leave her feet overhanging the darkness. Romola had never distinctly imagined such a future for herself; she was only beginning to feel the presence of effort in that clinging trust which had once been mere repose.

She waited and listened long, for Tito had not come straight home after leaving Niccolò Caparra, and it was more than two hours after the time when he was crossing the Ponte Rubaconte that Romola heard the great door of the court turning on its hinges, and hastened to the head of the stone steps. There was a lamp hanging over the stairs, and they could see each other distinctly as he ascended. The eighteen months had produced a more definable change in Romola's face than in Tito's: the expression was more subdued, less cold, and more beseeching, and, as the pink flush overspread her face now, in her joy that the long waiting was at an end, she was much lovelier than on the day when Tito had first seen her. On that day, any on-looker would have said that Romola's nature was made to command, and Tito's to bend; yet now Romola's mouth was quivering a little, and there was some timidity in her glance.

He made an effort to smile, as she said,

"My Tito, you are tired; it has been a fatiguing day: is it not true?"

Maso was there, and no more was said until they had crossed the ante-chamber and closed the door of the library behind them. The wood was burning brightly on the great dogs; that was one welcome for Tito, late as he was, and Romola's gentle voice was another.

He just turned and kissed her, when she took off his mantle, then went towards a high-backed chair placed for him near the fire, threw himself into it, and flung away his cap, saying, not peevishly, but in a fatigued tone of remonstrance, as he gave a slight shudder,

"Romola, I wish you would give up sitting in this library. Surely our own rooms are pleasanter in this chill weather."

Romola felt hurt. She had never seen Tito so indifferent in his manner; he was usually full of lively solicitous attention. And she had thought so much of his return to her after the long day's absence! He must be very weary.

"I wonder you have forgotten, Tito," she answered, looking at him, anxiously, as if she wanted to read an excuse for him in the signs of bodily fatigue. "You know I am making the catalogue on the new plan that my father wished for; you have not time to help me, so I must work at it closely."

Tito, instead of meeting Romola's glance, closed his eyes and rubbed his hands over his face and hair. He felt he was behaving unlike



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himself, but he would make amends to-morrow. The terrible resurrection of secret fears, which, if Romola had known them, would have alienated her from him for ever, caused him to feel an alienation already begun between them—caused him to feel a certain repulsion towards a woman from whose mind he was in danger. The feeling had taken hold of him unawares, and he was vexed with himself for behaving in this new cold way to her. He could not suddenly command any affectionate looks or words; he could only exert himself to say what might serve as an excuse.

"I am not well, Romola; you must not be surprised if I am peevish."

"Ah, you have had so much to tire you to-day," said Romola, kneeling down close to him, and laying her arm on his chest while she put his hair back caressingly.

Suddenly she drew her arm away with a start, and a gaze of alarmed inquiry.

"What have you got on under your tunic, Tito? Something as hard as iron."

"It *is* iron—it is chain armour," he said at once. He was prepared for the surprise and the question, and he spoke quietly, as of something that he was not hurried to explain.

"There was some unexpected danger to-day, then?" said Romola, in a tone of conjecture. "You had it lent to you for the procession?"

"No; it is my own. I shall be obliged to wear it constantly, for some time."

"What is it that threatens you, my Tito?" said Romola, looking terrified, and clinging to him again.

"Every one is threatened in these times, who is not a rabid enemy of the Medici. Don't look distressed, my Romola—this armour will make me safe against covert attacks."

Tito put his hand on her neck and smiled. This little dialogue about the armour had broken through the new crust, and made a channel for the old sweet habit of kindness.

"But my godfather, then," said Romola; "is not he, too, in danger? And he takes no precautions—ought he not? since he must surely be in more danger than you, who have so little influence compared with him."

"It is just because I am less important that I am in more danger," said Tito, readily. "I am suspected constantly of being an envoy. And men like Messer Bernardo are protected by their position and their extended family connections, which spread among all parties, while I am a Greek that nobody would avenge."

"But, Tito, is it a fear of some particular person, or only a vague sense of danger that has made you think of wearing this?" Romola was unable to repel the idea of a degrading fear in Tito, which mingled itself with her anxiety.

"I have had special threats," said Tito, "but I must beg you to be silent on the subject, my Romola. I shall consider that you have broken my confidence, if you mention it to your godfather."

"Assuredly I will not mention it," said Romola, flushing, "if you wish it to be a secret. But, dearest Tito," she added, after a moment's pause, in a tone of loving anxiety, "it will make you very wretched."

"What will make me wretched?" he said, with a scarcely perceptible movement across his face, as from some darting sensation.

"This fear—this heavy armour. I can't help shuddering as I feel it under my arm. I could fancy it a story of enchantment—that some malignant fiend had changed your sensitive human skin into a hard shell. It seems so unlike my bright, light-hearted Tito!"

"Then you would rather have your husband exposed to danger, when he leaves you?" said Tito, smiling. "If you don't mind my being poniarded or shot, why need I mind? I will give up the armour—shall I?"

"No, Tito, no. I am fanciful. Do not heed what I have said. But such crimes are surely not common in Florence? I have always heard my father and godfather say so. Have they become frequent lately?"

"It is not unlikely they will become frequent, with the bitter hatreds that are being bred continually."

Romola was silent a few moments. She shrank from insisting further on the subject of the armour. She tried to shake it off.

"Tell me what has happened to-day," she said, in a cheerful tone. "Has all gone off well?"

"Excellently well. First of all, the rain came and put an end to Luca Corsini's oration, which nobody wanted to hear, and a ready-tongued personage—some say it was Gaddi, some say it was Melema, but really it was done so quickly no one knows who it was—had the honour of giving the Cristianissimo the briefest possible welcome in bad French."

"Tito, it was you, I know," said Romola, smiling brightly, and kissing him. "How is it you never care about claiming anything? And after that?"

"Oh! after that, there was a show of armour, and jewels, and trappings, such as you saw at the last Florentine *giostra*, only a great deal more of them. There was strutting, and prancing, and confusion, and scrambling, and the people shouted, and the Cristianissimo smiled from ear to ear. And after that there was a great deal of flattery, and eating, and play. I was at Tornabuoni's. I will tell you about it to-morrow."

"Yes, dearest—never mind now. But is there any more hope that things will end peaceably for Florence—that the Republic will not get into fresh troubles?"

Tito gave a shrug. "Florence will have no peace but what it pays well for—that is clear."

Romola's face saddened, but she checked herself, and said, cheerfully, "You would not guess where I went to-day, Tito. I went to the Duomo, to hear Fra Girolamo."

Tito looked startled; he had immediately thought of Baldassarre's entrance into the Duomo: but Romola gave his look another meaning.

"You are surprised, are you not? It was a sudden thought. I want to know all about the public affairs now, and I determined to hear for myself what the Frate promised the people about this French invasion."

"Well, and what did you think of the prophet?"

"He certainly has a very mysterious power, that man. A great deal of his sermon was what I expected; but once I was strangely moved—I sobbed with the rest."

"Take care, Romola," said Tito, playfully, feeling relieved that she had said nothing about Baldassarre; "you have a touch of fanaticism in you. I shall have you seeing visions, like your brother."

"No; it was the same with every one else. He carried them all with him; unless it were that gross Dolfo Spini, whom I saw there making grimaces. There was even a wretched-looking man, with a rope round his neck—an escaped prisoner, I should think, who had run in for shelter—a very wild-eyed old man: I saw him with great tears rolling down his cheeks, as he looked and listened quite eagerly."

There was a slight pause before Tito spoke.

"I saw the man," he said, "the prisoner. I was outside the Duomo with Lorenzo Tornabuoni when he ran in. He had escaped from a French soldier. Did you see him when you came out?"

"No, he went out with our good old Piero di Cosimo. I saw Piero come in and cut off his rope, and take him out of the church. But you want rest, Tito? You feel ill?"

"Yes," said Tito, rising. The horrible sense that he must live in continual dread of what Baldassarre had said or done pressed upon him like a cold weight.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE PAINTED RECORD.

Four days later, Romola was on her way to the house of Piero di Cosimo, in the Via Gualfonda. Some of the streets through which she had to pass were lined with Frenchmen who were gazing at Florence, and with Florentines who were gazing at the French, and the gaze was not on either side entirely friendly and admiring. The first nation in Europe, of necessity finding itself, when out of its own country, in the presence of general inferiority, naturally assumed an air of conscious pre-eminence; and the Florentines, who had taken such pains to play the host amiably, were getting into the worst humour with their too superior guests.

For after the first smiling compliments and festivities were over—after wondrous Mysteries with unrivalled machinery of floating clouds



and angels had been presented in churches—after the royal guest had honoured Florentine dames with much of his Most Christian ogling at balls and suppers, and business had begun to be talked of—it appeared that the new Charlemagne regarded Florence as a conquered city, inasmuch as he had entered it with his lance in rest, talked of leaving his viceroy behind him, and had thoughts of bringing back the Medici. Singular logic this appeared to be on the part of an elect instrument of God! since the policy of Piero de' Medici, disowned by the people, had been the only offence of Florence against the majesty of France. And Florence was determined not to submit. The determination was being expressed very strongly in consultations of citizens inside the Old Palace, and it was beginning to show itself on the broad flags of the streets and piazze wherever there was an opportunity of flouting an insolent Frenchman. Under these circumstances the streets were not altogether a pleasant promenade for well-born women; but Romola, shrouded in her black veil and mantle, and with old Maso by her side, felt secure enough from impertinent observation.

And she was impatient to visit Piero di Cosimo. A copy of her father's portrait as *Œdipus*, which he had long ago undertaken to make for her, was not yet finished; and Piero was so uncertain in his work—sometimes, when the demand was not peremptory, laying aside a picture for months; sometimes thrusting it into a corner or coffer, where it was likely to be utterly forgotten—that she felt it necessary to watch over his progress. She was a favourite with the painter, and he was inclined to fulfil any wish of hers, but no general inclination could be trusted as a safeguard against his sudden whims. He had told her the week before that the picture would perhaps be finished by this time; and Romola was nervously anxious to have in her possession a copy of the only portrait existing of her father in the days of his blindness, lest his image should grow dim in her mind. The sense of defect in her devotedness to him made her cling with all the force of compunction as well as affection to the duties of memory. Love does not aim simply at the conscious good of the beloved object; it is not satisfied without perfect loyalty of heart; it aims at its own completeness.

Romola, by special favour, was allowed to intrude on the painter without previous notice. She lifted the iron slide and called Piero in a flute-like tone, as the little maiden with the eggs had done in Tito's presence. Piero was quick in answering, but when he opened the door he accounted for his quickness in a manner that was not complimentary.

"Ah, Madonna Romola, it is you. I thought my eggs were come; I wanted them."

"I have brought you something better than hard eggs, Piero. Maso has got a little basket full of cakes and *confetti* for you," said Romola, smiling, as she put back her veil. She took the basket from Maso, and stepping into the house, said,

"I know you like these things when you can have them without trouble. Confess you do."

"Yes, when they come to me as easily as the light does," said Piero, folding his arms and looking down at the sweetmeats as Romola uncovered them and glanced at him archly. "And they are come along with the light now," he added, lifting his eyes to her face and hair with a painter's admiration, as her hood, dragged by the weight of her veil, fell backward.

"But I know what the sweetmeats are for," he went on; "they are to stop my mouth while you scold me. Well, go on into the next room, and you will see I've done something to the picture since you saw it, though it's not finished yet. But I didn't promise, you know: I take care not to promise:

*'Chi promette e non mantiene  
L'anima sua non va mai bene.'*"

The door opening on the wild garden was closed now, and the painter was at work. Not at Romola's picture, however. That was standing on the floor, propped against the wall, and Piero stooped to lift it, that he might carry it into the proper light. But in lifting away this picture, he had disclosed another—the oil-sketch of Tito, to which he had made an important addition within the last few days. It was so much smaller than the other picture that it stood far within it, and Piero, apt to forget where he had placed anything, was not aware of what he had revealed as, peering at some detail in the painting which he held in his hands, he went to place it on an easel. But Romola exclaimed, flushing with astonishment,

"That is Tito!"

Piero looked round, and gave a silent shrug. He was vexed at his own forgetfulness.

She was still looking at the sketch in astonishment; but presently she turned towards the painter, and said with puzzled alarm,

"What a strange picture! When did you paint it? What does it mean?"

"A mere fancy of mine," said Piero, lifting off his skull-cap, scratching his head, and making the usual grimace by which he avoided the betrayal of any feeling. "I wanted a handsome young face for it, and your husband's was just the thing."

He went forward, stooped down to the picture, and lifting it away with its back to Romola, pretended to be giving it a passing examination, before putting it aside as a thing not good enough to show.

But Romola, who had the fact of the armour in her mind, and was penetrated by this strange coincidence of things which associated Tito with the idea of fear, went to his elbow and said,—

"Don't put it away; let me look again. That man with the rope round his neck—I saw him—I saw you come to him in the Duomo. What was it that made you put him into a picture with Tito?"

Piero saw no better resource than to tell part of the truth.

"It was a mere accident. The man was running away—running up the steps, and caught hold of your husband: I suppose he had stumbled. I happened to be there, and saw it, and I thought the savage-looking old fellow was a good subject. But it's worth nothing—it's only a freakish daub of mine," Piero ended, contemptuously, moving the sketch away with an air of decision, and putting it on a high shelf. "Come and look at the *Cedipus*."

He had shown a little too much anxiety in putting the sketch out of her sight, and had produced the very impression he had sought to prevent—that there was really something unpleasant, something disadvantageous to Tito, in the circumstances out of which the picture arose. But this impression silenced her: her pride and delicacy shrank from questioning further, where questions might seem to imply that she could entertain even a slight suspicion against her husband. She merely said, in as quiet a tone as she could,

"He was a strange piteous-looking man, that prisoner. Do you know anything more of him?"

"No more: I showed him the way to the hospital, that's all. See now, the face of *Cedipus* is pretty nearly finished; tell me what you think of it."

Romola now gave her whole attention to her father's portrait, standing in long silence before it.

"Ah!" she said at last, "you have done what I wanted. You have given it more of the listening look. My good Piero"—she turned towards him with bright moist eyes—"I am very grateful to you."

"Now, that's what I can't bear in you women," said Piero, turning impatiently, and kicking aside the objects that littered the floor—"you are always pouring out feelings where there's no call for them. Why should you be grateful to me for a picture you pay me for, especially when I make you wait for it? And if I paint a picture, I suppose it's for my own pleasure and credit to paint it well, eh? Are you to thank a man for not being a rogue or a noodle? It's enough if he himself thanks Messer Domeneddio, who has made him neither the one nor the other. But women think walls are held together with honey."

"You crusty Piero! I forgot how snappish you are. Here, put this nice sweetmeat in your mouth," said Romola, smiling through her tears, and taking something very crisp and sweet from the little basket.

Piero accepted it very much as that proverbial bear that dreams of pears might accept an exceedingly mellow "swan-egg"—really liking the gift, but accustomed to have his pleasures and pains concealed under a shaggy coat.

"It's good, Madonna Antigone," said Piero, putting his fingers in the basket for another. He had eaten nothing but hard eggs for a fortnight. Romola stood opposite him, feeling her new anxiety suspended for a little while by the sight of this naïve enjoyment.

"Good-by, Piero," she said, presently, setting down the basket. "I promise not to thank you if you finish the portrait soon and well. I will tell you, you were bound to do it for your own credit."

"Good," said Piero, curtly, helping her to fold her mantle and veil round her with much deftness.

"I'm glad she asked no more questions about that sketch," he thought, when he had closed the door behind her. "I should be sorry for her to guess that I thought her fine husband a good model for a coward. But I made light of it; she'll not think of it again."

Piero was too sanguine, as open-hearted men are apt to be when they attempt a little clever simulation. The thought of the picture pressed more and more on Romola as she walked homeward. She could not help putting together the two facts of the chain armour and the encounter mentioned by Piero, between her husband and the prisoner, which had happened on the morning of the day when the armour was adopted. That look of terror which the painter had given Tito, had he seen it? What could it all mean?

"It means nothing," she tried to assure herself. "It was a mere coincidence. Shall I ask Tito about it?" Her mind said at last, "No: I will not question him about anything he did not tell me spontaneously. It is an offence against the trust I owe him." Her heart said, "I dare not ask him." There was a terrible flaw in the trust: she was afraid of any hasty movement, as men are who hold something precious and want to believe that it is not broken.

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#### CHAPTER XXIX.

##### A MOMENT OF TRIUMPH.

"THE old fellow has vanished; went on towards Arezzo the next morning; not liking the smell of the French, I suppose, after being their prisoner. I went to the hospital to inquire after him; I wanted to know if those broth-making monks had found out whether he was in his right mind or not. However, they said he showed no signs of madness—only took no notice of questions, and seemed to be planting a vine twenty miles off. He was a mysterious old tiger. I should have liked to know something more about him."

It was in Nello's shop that Piero di Cosimo was speaking, on the twenty-fourth of November, just a week after the entrance of the French. There was a party of six or seven assembled at the rather unusual hour of three in the afternoon; for it was a day on which all Florence was excited by the prospect of some decisive political event. Every lounging-place was full, and every shopkeeper who had no wife or deputy to leave in charge stood at his door with his thumbs in his belt; while the streets were constantly sprinkled with artisans pausing or passing lazily like

floating splinters, ready to rush forward impetuously if any object attracted them.

Nello had been thrumming the lute as he half sat on the board against the shop window, and kept an outlook towards the piazza.

"Ah," he said, laying down the lute, with emphasis, "I would not for a gold florin have missed that sight of the French soldiers waddling in their broad shoes after their runaway prisoners! That comes of leaving my shop to shave magnificent chins. It is always so: if ever I quit this navel of the earth something takes the opportunity of happening in my piazza."

"Yes, you ought to have been there," said Piero, in his biting way, "just to see your favourite Greek look as frightened as if Satanasso had laid hold of him. I like to see your ready smiling *Messeri* caught in a sudden wind and obliged to show their lining in spite of themselves. What colour do you think a man's liver is, who looks like a bleached deer as soon as a chance stranger lays hold of him suddenly?"

"Piero, keep that vinegar of thine as sauce to thy own eggs! Suffocation! What is it against my *bel erudito* that he looked startled when he felt a pair of claws upon him and saw an unchained madman at his elbow? Your scholar is not like those beastly Swiss and Germans, whose heads are fit for nothing but battering-rams, and who have such large appetites that they think nothing of taking a cannon-ball before breakfast. We Florentines count some other qualities in a man besides that vulgar stuff called bravery, which is to be got by hiring dunderheads at so much per dozen. I tell you, as soon as men found out they had more brains than oxen they set the oxen to draw for them, and when we Florentines found out that we had more brains than other men we set them to fight for us."

"Treason, Nello!" a voice called out from the inner sanctum, "that is not the doctrine of the State. Florence is grinding its weapons; and the last well-authenticated vision announced by the Frate was Mars standing on the Palazzo Vecchio with his arm on the shoulder of San Giovanni Battista, who was offering him a piece of honeycomb."

"It is well, Francesco," said Nello. "Florence has a few thicker skulls that may do to bombard Pisa with; there will still be the finer spirits left at home to do the thinking and the shaving. And, as for our Piero here, if he makes such a point of valour, let him carry his biggest brush for a weapon and his palette for a shield, and challenge the widest-mouthed Swiss he can see in the Prato to a single combat."

"Va, Nello," growled Piero, "thy tongue runs on as usual, like a mill when the Arno's full—whether there's grist or not."

"Excellent grist, I tell thee. For it would be as reasonable to expect a grizzled painter like thee to be fond of getting a javelin inside thee as to expect a man whose wits have been sharpened on the classics to like having his handsome face clawed by a wild beast."

"There you go, supposing you'll get people to put their legs into a

sack because you call it a pair of hosen," said Piero. "Who said anything about a wild beast, or about an unarmed man rushing on battle? Fighting is a trade, and it's not my trade. I should be a fool to run after danger, but I could face it if it came to me."

"How is it you're so afraid of the thunder then, my Piero?" said Nello, determined to chase down the accuser. "You ought to be able to understand why one man is shaken by a thing that seems a trifle to others—you who hide yourself with the rats as soon as a storm comes on."

"That is because I have a particular sensibility to loud sounds; it has nothing to do with my courage or my conscience."

"Well, and Tito Melema may have a peculiar sensibility to being laid hold of unexpectedly by prisoners who have run away from French soldiers. Men are born with antipathies; I myself can't abide the smell of mint. Tito was born with an antipathy to old prisoners who stumble and clutch. Ecco!"

That is a general laugh at Nello's defence, and it was clear that Piero's disinclination towards Tito was not shared by the company. The painter, with his undecipherable grimace, took the tow from his scarsella and stuffed his ears, as a sign of indignant contempt, while Nello went on triumphantly,—

"No, my Piero, I can't afford to have my *bel erudito* decried; and Florence can't afford it either, with her scholars moulting off her at the early age of forty. Our Phoenix Pico just gone straight to Paradise, as the Frate has informed us; and the incomparable Poliziano, not two months since, gone to—well, well, let us hope he is not gone to the eminent scholars in the Malebolge."

"By the way," said Francesco Cei, "have you heard that Camilla Rucellai has outdone the Frate in her prophecies? She prophesied two years ago that Pico would die in the time of lilies. He has died in November. 'Not at all the time of lilies,' said the scorners. 'Go to!' says Camilla; 'it is the lilies of France I meant, and it seems to me they are close enough under your nostrils.' I say, 'Euge, Camilla!' If the Frate can prove that any one of his visions has been as well fulfilled, I'll declare myself a *piagnone* to-morrow."

"You are something too flippant about the Frate, Francesco," said Pietro Cennini, the scholar. "We are all indebted to him in these weeks for preaching peace and quietness, and the laying aside of party quarrels. They are men of small discernment who would be glad to see the people slipping the Frate's leash just now. And if the Most Christian King is obstinate about the treaty to-day, and will not sign what is fair and honourable to Florence, Fra Girolamo is the man we must trust in to bring him to reason."

"You speak truth, Messer Pietro," said Nello, "the Frate is one of the firmest nails Florence has to hang on—at least, that is the opinion of the most respectable chins I have the honour of shaving. But young

Messer Niccolò was saying here the other morning—and, doubtless, Francesco means the same thing—there is as wonderful a power of stretching in the meaning of visions as in Dido's bull's hide. A dream may mean whatever comes after it, *mi pare*. As our Franco Sacchetti says, a woman dreams over-night of a serpent biting her, breaks a drinking-cup the next day, and cries out, 'Look you, I thought something would happen—it's plain now what the serpent meant.'

"But the Frate's visions are not of that sort," said Cronaca. "He not only says what will happen—that the Church will be scourged and renovated, and the heathens converted—he says it shall happen quickly. He is no slippery pretender who provides loopholes for himself, he is——"

"What is this? what is this?" exclaimed Nello, jumping off the *desco*, and putting his head out at the door. "Here are people streaming into the piazza, and shouting. Something must have happened in the Via Larga. Aha!" he burst forth with delighted astonishment, stepping out, laughing, and waving his cap.

All the rest of the company hastened to the door. News from the Via Larga was just what they had been waiting for. But if the news had come into the piazza, they were not a little surprised at the form of its advent. Carried above the shoulders of the people, on a bench apparently snatched up in the street, sat Tito Melema, in smiling amusement at the compulsion he was under. His cap had slipped off his head, and hung by the *becchetto* which was wound loosely round his neck; and as he saw the group at Nello's door he lifted up his fingers in beckoning recognition. The next minute he had leaped from the bench on to a cart filled with bales, that stood in the broad space between the Baptistery and the steps of the Duomo, while the people swarmed round him with the noisy eagerness of poultry expecting to be fed. But there was silence when he began to speak, in his clear mellow voice—

"Citizens of Florence! I have no warrant to tell the news except your will. But the news is good, and will harm no man in the telling. The Most Christian King is signing a treaty that is honourable to Florence. But you owe it to one of your citizens, who spoke a word worthy of the ancient Romans—you owe it to Piero Capponi!"

Immediately there was a roar of voices.

"Capponi! Capponi! What said our Piero?" "Ah! he wouldn't stand being sent from Herod to Pilate!" "We knew Piero!" "*Orsù!* Tell us, what did he say?"

When the roar of insistence had subsided a little, Tito began again—

"The Most Christian King demanded a little too much—was obstinate—said at last, 'I shall order my trumpets to sound.' Then, Florentine citizens! your Piero Capponi, speaking with the voice of a free city, said, 'If you sound your trumpets, we will ring our bells!' He snatched the copy of the dishonouring conditions from the hands of the secretary, tore it in pieces, and turned to leave the royal presence."

Again there were loud shouts—and again impatient demands for more.



"Then, Florentines, the high majesty of France felt, perhaps for the first time, all the majesty of a free city. And the Most Christian King himself hastened from his place to call Piero Capponi back. The great spirit of your Florentine city did its work by a great word, without need of the great actions that lay ready behind it. And the King has consented to sign the treaty, which preserves the honour, as well as the safety, of Florence. The banner of France will float over every Florentine galley in sign of amity and common privilege, but above that banner will be written the word 'Liberty!'

"That is all the news I have to tell; is it not enough?—since it is for the glory of every one of you, citizens of Florence, that you have a fellow-citizen who knows how to speak your will."

As the shouts rose again, Tito looked round with inward amusement at the various crowd, each of whom was elated with the notion that Piero Capponi had somehow represented him—that he was the mind of which Capponi was the mouthpiece. He enjoyed the humour of the incident, which had suddenly transformed him, an alien and a friend of the Medici, into an orator who tickled the ears of the people blatant for some unknown good which they called liberty. He felt quite glad that he had been laid hold of and hurried along by the crowd as he was coming out of the palace in the Via Larga with a commission to the Signoria. It was very easy, very pleasant, this exercise of speaking to the general satisfaction: a man who knew how to persuade need never be in danger from any party; he could convince each that he was feigning with all the others. The gestures and faces of weavers and dyers were certainly amusing when looked at from above in this way. Tito was beginning to get easier in his armour, and at this moment was quite unconscious of it. He stood with one hand holding his recovered cap, and with the other at his belt, the light of a complacent smile in his long lustrous eyes, as he made a parting reverence to his audience, before springing down from the bales—when suddenly his glance met that of a man who had not at all the amusing aspect of the exulting weavers, dyers, and wool-carders. The face of this man was clean shaven, his hair close-clipped, and he wore a decent felt hat. A single glance would hardly have sufficed to assure any one but Tito that this was the face of the escaped prisoner who had laid hold of him on the steps. But to Tito it came not simply as the face of the escaped prisoner, but as a face with which he had been familiar long, long years before.

It seemed all compressed into a second—the sight of Baldassarre looking at him, the sensation shooting through him like a fiery arrow, and the act of leaping from the cart. He would have leaped down in the same instant, whether he had seen Baldassarre or not, for he was in a hurry to be gone to the Palazzo Vecchio: this time he had not betrayed himself by look or movement, and he said inwardly that he should not be taken by surprise again; he should be prepared to see this face rise up continually like the intermittent blotch that comes in diseased vision. But this reappearance of Baldassarre so much more in his own likeness,

tightened the pressure of dread: the idea of his madness lost its likelihood now he was shaven and clad like a decent though poor citizen. Certainly, there was a great change in his face; but how could it be otherwise? And yet, if he were perfectly sane—in possession of all his powers and all his learning—why was he lingering in this way before making known his identity? It must be for the sake of making his scheme of vengeance more complete. But he did linger: that at least gave an opportunity for flight. And Tito began to think that flight was his only resource.

But while he, with his back turned on the Piazza del Duomo, had lost the recollection of the new part he had been playing, and was no longer thinking of the many things which a ready brain and tongue made easy, but of a few things which destiny had somehow made very difficult, the enthusiasm which he had fed contemptuously was creating a scene in that Piazza in grand contrast with the inward drama of self-centered fear which he had carried away from it.

The crowd, on Tito's disappearance, had begun to turn their faces towards the outlets of the Piazza in the direction of the Via Larga, when the sight of *Mazzieri*, or mace-bearers, entering from the Via de' Martelli, announced the approach of dignitaries. They must be the syndics, or commissioners, charged with the effecting of the treaty; the treaty must be already signed, and they had come away from the royal presence. Piero Capponi was coming—the brave heart that had known how to speak for Florence. The effect on the crowd was remarkable; they parted with softening, dropping voices, subsiding into silence,—and the silence became so perfect that the tread of the syndics on the broad pavement, and the rustle of their black silk garments, could be heard, like rain in the night. There were four of them; but it was not the two learned doctors of law, Messer Guidantonio Vespucci and Messer Domenico Bonsi, that the crowd waited for; it was not Francesco Valori, popular as he had become in these late days. The moment belonged to another man, of firm presence, as little inclined to humour the people as to humour any other unreasonable claimants—loving order, like one who by force of fortune had been made a merchant, and by force of nature had become a soldier. It was not till he was seen at the entrance of the piazza that the silence was broken, and then one loud shout of "Capponi, Capponi! Well done, Capponi!" rang through the piazza.

The simple, resolute man looked round him with grave joy. His fellow-citizens gave him a great funeral two years later, when he had died in fight: there were torches carried by all the magistracy, and torches again, and trains of banners. But it is not known that he felt any joy in the oration that was delivered in his praise, as the banners waved over his bier. Let us be glad that he got some thanks and praise while he lived.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

## THE AVENGER'S SECRET.

It was the first time that Baldassarre had been in the Piazza del Duomo since his escape. He had a strong desire to hear the remarkable monk preach again, but he had shrunk from reappearing in the same spot where he had been seen half-naked, with neglected hair, with a rope round his neck—in the same spot where he had been called a madman. The feeling, in its freshness, was too strong to be overcome by any trust he had in the change he had made in his appearance; for when the words "some madman, surely," had fallen from Tito's lips, it was not their baseness and cruelty only that had made their viper sting—it was Baldassarre's instantaneous bitter consciousness that he might be unable to prove the words false. Along with the passionate desire for vengeance that possessed him had arisen the keen sense that his power of achieving the vengeance was doubtful. It was as if Tito had been helped by some diabolical prompter, who had whispered Baldassarre's saddest secret in the traitor's ear. He was not mad; for he carried within him that piteous stamp of sanity—the clear consciousness of shattered faculties: he measured his own feebleness. With the first movements of vindictive rage awoke a vague caution, like that of a wild beast that is fierce but feeble—or like that of an insect whose little fragment of earth has given way, and made it pause in a palsy of distrust. It was this distrust, this determination to take no step which might betray anything concerning himself, that had made Baldassarre reject Piero di Cosimo's friendly advances.

He had been equally cautious at the hospital, only telling, in answer to the questions of the brethren there, that he had been made a prisoner by the French on his way from Genoa. But his age, and the indications in his speech and manner that he was of a different class from the ordinary mendicants and poor travellers who were entertained in the hospital, had induced the monks to offer him extra charity—a coarse woollen tunic to protect him from the cold, a pair of peasant's shoes, and a few *danari*, smallest of Florentine coins, to help him on his way. He had gone on the road to Arezzo early in the morning; but he had paused at the first little town, and had used a couple of his *danari* to get himself shaved, and to have his circle of hair clipped short, in his former fashion. The barber there had a little hand-mirror of bright steel: it was a long while, it was years, since Baldassarre had looked at himself, and now, as his eyes fell on that hand-mirror, a new thought shot through his mind. "Was he so changed that Tito really did not know him?" The thought was such a sudden arrest of impetuous currents, that it was a painful shock to him: his hand shook like a leaf, as he put away

the barber's arm and asked for the mirror. He wished to see himself before he was shaved. The barber, noticing his tremulousness, held the mirror for him.

No, he was not so changed as that. He himself had known the wrinkles as they had been three years ago; they were only deeper now: there was the same rough, clumsy skin, making little superficial bosses on the brow, like so many cipher marks; the skin was only yellower, only looked more like a lifeless rind. That shaggy white beard—it was no disguise to eyes that had looked closely at him for sixteen years—to eyes that ought to have searched for him with the expectation of finding him changed, as men search for the beloved among the bodies cast up by the waters. There was something different in his glance, but it was a difference that should only have made the recognition of him the more startling; for is not a known voice all the more thrilling when it is heard as a cry? But the doubt was folly: he had felt that Tito knew him. He put out his hand and pushed the mirror away. The strong currents were rushing on again, and the energies of hatred and vengeance were active once more.

He went back on the way towards Florence again, but he did not wish to enter the city till dusk; so he turned aside from the high-road, and sat down by a little pool shadowed on one side by alder-bushes still sprinkled with yellow leaves. It was a calm November day, and he no sooner saw the pool than he thought its still surface might be a mirror for him. He wanted to contemplate himself slowly, as he had not dared to do in the presence of the barber. He sat down on the edge of the pool, and bent forward to look earnestly at the image of himself.

Was there something wandering and imbecile in his face—something like what he felt in his mind?

Not now; not when he was examining himself with a look of eager inquiry: on the contrary, there was an intense purpose in his eyes. But at other times? Yes, it must be so: in the long hours when he had the vague aching of an unremembered past within him—when he seemed to sit in dark loneliness, visited by whispers which died out mockingly as he strained his ear after them, and by forms that seemed to approach him and float away as he thrust out his hand to grasp them—in those hours, doubtless, there must be continual frustration and amazement in his glance. And, more horrible still, when the thick cloud parted for a moment, and, as he sprang forward with hope, rolled together again, and left him helpless as before; doubtless then, there was a blank confusion in his face, as of a man suddenly smitten with blindness.

Could he prove anything? Could he even begin to allege anything, with the confidence that the links of thought would not break away? Would any believe that he had ever had a mind filled with rare knowledge, busy with close thoughts, ready with various speech? It had all slipped away from him—that laboriously gathered store. Was it utterly and for ever gone from him, like the waters from an urn lost in the wide

ocean? Or, was it still within him, imprisoned by some obstruction that might one day break asunder?

It might be so; he tried to keep his grasp on that hope. For, since the day when he had first walked feebly from his couch of straw, and had felt a new darkness within him under the sunlight, his mind had undergone changes, partly gradual and persistent, partly sudden and fleeting. As he had recovered his strength of body, he had recovered his self-command and the energy of his will; he had recovered the memory of all that part of his life which was closely inwrought with his emotions; and he had felt more and more constantly and painfully the uneasy sense of lost knowledge. But more than that—once or twice, when he had been strongly excited, he had seemed momentarily to be in entire possession of his past self, as old men doze for an instant, and get back the consciousness of their youth: he seemed again to see Greek pages and understand them, again to feel his mind moving unbenumbed among familiar ideas. It had been but a flash, and the darkness closing in again seemed the more horrible; but might not the same thing happen again for longer periods? If it would only come and stay long enough for him to achieve a revenge—devise an exquisite suffering, such as a mere right arm could never inflict!

He raised himself from his stooping attitude, and, folding his arms, attempted to concentrate all his mental force on the plan he must immediately pursue. He had to wait for knowledge and opportunity, and while he waited he must have the means of living without beggary. What he dreaded of all things now was, that any one should think him a foolish, helpless old man. No one must know that half his memory was gone: the lost strength might come again; and if it were only for a little while, that might be enough.

He knew how to begin to get the information he wanted about Tito. He had repeated the words Bratti Ferravecchj so constantly after they had been uttered to him, that they never slipped from him for long together. A man at Genoa, on whose finger he had seen Tito's ring, had told him that he bought that ring at Florence, of a young Greek, well dressed, and with a handsome dark face, in the shop of a *rigattiere* called Bratti Ferravecchj, in the street also called Ferravecchj. This discovery had caused a violent agitation in Baldassarre. Until then he had clung with all the tenacity of his fervid nature to his faith in Tito, and had not for a moment believed himself to be wilfully forsaken. At first he had said, "My bit of parchment has never reached him; that is why I am still toiling at Antioch. But he is searching: he knows where I was lost; he will trace me out, and find me at last." Then, when he was taken to Corinth, he induced his owners, by the assurance that he should be sought out and ransomed, to provide securely against the failure of any inquiries that might be made about him at Antioch; and at Corinth he thought joyfully, "Here, at last, he must find me. Here he is sure to touch, whichever way he goes." But before another year had passed the illness

had come from which he had risen with body and mind so shattered that he was worse than worthless to his owners except for the sake of the ransom that did not come. Then, as he sat helpless in the morning sunlight, he began to think, "Tito has been drowned, or they have made *him* a prisoner too. I shall see him no more. He set out after me, but misfortune overtook him. I shall see his face no more." Sitting in his new feebleness and despair, supporting his head between his hands, with blank eyes and lips that moved uncertainly, he looked so much like a hopelessly imbecile old man, that his owners were contented to be rid of him, and allowed a Genoese merchant, who had compassion on him as an Italian, to take him on board his galley. In a voyage of many months in the Archipelago and along the sea-board of Asia Minor, Baldassarre had recovered his bodily strength, but on landing at Genoa he had so weary a sense of his desolateness that he almost wished he had died of that illness at Corinth. There was just one possibility that hindered the wish from being decided: it was that Tito might not be dead, but living in a state of imprisonment or destitution; and if he lived, there was still a hope for Baldassarre—faint, perhaps, and likely to be long deferred, but still a hope, that he might find his child, his cherished son again; might yet again clasp hands and meet face to face with the one being who remembered him as he had been before his mind was broken.

In this state of feeling he had chanced to meet the stranger who wore Tito's onyx ring, and though Baldassarre would have been unable to describe the ring beforehand, the sight of it stirred the dormant fibres, and he recognized it. That Tito nearly a year after his father had been parted from him should have been living in apparent prosperity at Florence, selling the gem which he ought not to have sold till the last extremity, was a fact that Baldassarre shrank from trying to account for; he was glad to be stunned and bewildered by it, rather than to have any distinct thought; he tried to feel nothing but joy that he should behold Tito again. Perhaps Tito had thought that his father was dead; somehow the mystery would be explained. "But at least I shall meet eyes that will remember me; I am not alone in the world."

And now again Baldassarre said, "I am not alone in the world; I shall never be alone, for my revenge is with me."

It was as the instrument of that revenge, as something merely external and subservient to his true life, that he bent down again to examine himself with hard curiosity—not, he thought, because he had any care for a withered, forsaken old man, whom nobody loved, whose soul was like a deserted home, where the ashes were cold upon the hearth, and the walls were bare of all but the marks of what had been. It is in the nature of all human passion, the lowest as well as the highest, that there is a point at which it ceases to be properly egoistic, and is like a fire kindled within our being to which everything else in us is mere fuel.

He looked at the pale black-browed image in the water till he identified it with that self from which his revenge seemed to be a thing



apart; and he felt as if the image too heard the silent language of his thought.

"I was a loving fool—I worshipped a woman once, and believed she could care for me; and then I took a helpless child and fostered him; and I watched him as he grew, to see if he would care for me only a little—care for *me* over and above the good he got from me. I would have torn open my breast to warm him with my life-blood if I could only have seen him care a little for the pain of my wound. I have laboured, I have strained to crush out of this hard life one drop of unselfish love. Fool! men love their own delights—there is no delight to be had in me. And yet I watched till I believed I saw what I watched for. When he was a child he lifted soft eyes towards me, and held my hand willingly: I thought, this boy will surely love me a little: because I give my life to him and strive that he shall know no sorrow, he will care a little when I am thirsty—the drop he lays on my parched lips will be a joy to him. . . . Curses on him! I wish I may see him lie with those red lips white and dry as ashes, and when he looks for pity I wish he may see my face rejoicing in his pain. It is all a lie—this world is a lie—there is no goodness but in hate. Fool! not one drop of love came with all your striving—life has not given you one drop. But there are deep draughts in this world for hatred and revenge. I have memory left for that, and there is strength in my arm—there is strength in my will—and if I can do nothing but kill him——"

But Baldassarre's mind rejected the thought of that brief punishment. His whole soul had been thrilled into immediate unreasoning belief in that eternity of vengeance where he, an undying hate, might clutch for ever an undying traitor, and hear that fair smiling hardness cry and moan with anguish. But the primary need and hope was to see a slow revenge under the same sky and on the same earth where he himself had been forsaken and had fainted with despair. And as soon as he tried to concentrate his mind on the means of attaining his end, the sense of his weakness pressed upon him like a frosty ache. This despised body, which was to be the instrument of a sublime vengeance, must be nourished and decently clad. If he had to wait he must labour, and his labour must be of a humble sort, for he had no skill. He wondered whether the sight of written characters would so stimulate his faculties that he might venture to try and find work as a copyist: *that* might win him some credence for his past scholarship. But no! he dared trust neither hand nor brain. He must be content to do the work that was most like that of a beast of burden: in this mercantile city many porters must be wanted, and he could at least carry weights. Thanks to the justice that struggled in this confused world in behalf of vengeance, his limbs had got back some of their old sturdiness. He was stripped of all else that men would give coin for.

But the new urgency of this habitual thought brought a new suggestion. There was something hanging by a cord round his bare neck;



something apparently so paltry that the piety of Turks and Frenchmen had spared it—a tiny parchment bag blackened with age. It had hung round his neck as a precious charm when he was a boy, and he had kept it carefully on his breast, not believing that it contained anything but a tiny scroll of parchment rolled up hard. He might long ago have thrown it away as a relic of his dead mother's superstition; but he had thought of it as a relic of her love, and had kept it. It was part of the piety associated with such *brevi*, that they should never be opened, and at any previous moment in his life Baldassarre would have said that no sort of thirst would prevail upon him to open this little bag for the chance of finding that it contained, not parchment, but an engraved amulet which would be worth money. But now a thirst had come like that which makes men open their own veins to satisfy it, and the thought of the possible amulet no sooner crossed Baldassarre's mind than with nervous fingers he snatched the *breve* from his neck. It all rushed through his mind—the long years he had worn it, the far-off sunny balcony at Naples looking towards the blue waters, where he had leaned against his mother's knee; but it made no moment of hesitation: all piety now was transmuted into a just revenge. He bit and tore till the doubles of parchment were laid open, and then—it was a sight that made him pant—there *was* an amulet. It was very small, but it was as blue as those far-off waters; it was an engraved sapphire, which must be worth some gold ducats. Baldassarre no sooner saw those possible ducats than he saw some of them exchanged for a poniard. He did not want to use the poniard yet, but he longed to possess it. If he could grasp its handle and feel its edge, that blank in his mind—that past which fell away continually—would not make him feel so cruelly helpless: the sharp steel that despised talents and eluded strength would be at his side, as the unfailing friend of feeble justice. There was a sparkling triumph under Baldassarre's black eyebrows as he replaced the little sapphire inside the bits of parchment and wound the string tightly round them.

It was nearly dusk now, and he rose to walk back towards Florence. With his *danari* to buy him some bread, he felt rich: he could lie out in the open air, as he found plenty more doing in all corners of Florence. And in the next few days he had sold his sapphire, had added to his clothing, had bought a bright dagger, and had still a pair of gold florins left. But he meant to hoard that treasure carefully: his lodging was an outhouse with a heap of straw in it, in a thinly-inhabited part of Oltrarno, and he thought of looking about for work as a porter.

He had bought his dagger at Bratti's. Paying his meditated visit there one evening at dusk, he had found that singular rag-merchant just returned from one of his rounds, emptying out his basketful of broken glass and old iron amongst his handsome show of heterogeneous second-hand goods. As Baldassarre entered the shop, and looked towards the smart pieces of apparel, the musical instruments, and weapons, that were

displayed in the broadest light of the window, his eye at once singled out a dagger that hung up high against a red scarf. By buying that dagger he could not only satisfy a strong desire; he could open his original errand in a more indirect manner than by speaking of the onyx ring. In the course of bargaining for the weapon he let drop, with cautious carelessness, that he came from Genoa, and had been directed to Bratti's shop by an acquaintance in that city who had bought a very valuable ring there. Had the respectable trader any more such rings?

Whereupon Bratti had much to say as to the unlikelihood of such rings being within reach of many people, with much vaunting of his own rare connections, due to his known wisdom and honesty. It might be true that he was a pedlar—he chose to be a pedlar; though he was rich enough to kick his heels in his shop all day. But those who thought they had said all there was to be said about Bratti, when they had called him a pedlar, were a good deal further off the truth than the other side of Pisa. How was it that he could put that ring in a stranger's way? It was, because he had a very particular knowledge of a handsome young signor, who did not look quite so fine a feathered bird when Bratti first set eyes on him as he did at the present time. And by a question or two Baldassarre extracted, without any trouble, such a rough and rambling account of Tito's life as the pedlar could give, since the time when he had found him sleeping under the Loggia de' Cerchi. It never occurred to Bratti that the decent man (who was rather deaf, apparently, asking him to say many things twice over) had any curiosity about Tito; the curiosity was doubtless about himself, as a truly remarkable pedlar.

And Baldassarre left Bratti's shop, not only with the dagger at his side, but with a general knowledge of Tito's conduct and position—of his early sale of the jewels, his immediate quiet settlement of himself at Florence, his marriage, and his great prosperity.

"What story had he told about his previous life—about his father?"

That was a question to which it would be difficult for Baldassarre to discover the answer. Meanwhile, he wanted to learn all he could about Florence. But he found, to his acute distress, that of the new details he learned he could only retain a few, and those only by continual repetition; and he began to be afraid of listening to any new discourse, lest it should obliterate what he was already striving to remember.

The day he was discerned by Tito in the Piazza del Duomo, he had the fresh anguish of this consciousness in his mind, and Tito's ready speech fell upon him like the mockery of a glib, defying demon.

As he went home to his heap of straw, and passed by the booksellers' shops in the Via del Garbo, he paused to look at the volumes spread open. Could he by long gazing at one of those books lay hold of the slippery threads of memory? Could he by striving get a firm grasp somewhere, and lift himself above these waters that flowed over him?

He was tempted, and bought the cheapest Greek book he could see. He carried it home and sat on his heap of straw, looking at the characters

by the light of the small window; but no inward light arose on them. Soon the evening darkness came; but it made little difference to Bal-dassarre. His strained eyes seemed still to see the white pages with the unintelligible black marks upon them.

## CHAPTER XXX

### FRUIT IS SEED.

"My Romola," said Tito, the second morning after he had made his speech in the Piazza del Duomo, "I am to receive grand visitors to-day; the Milanese Count is coming again, and the Seneschal de Beaucaire, the great favourite of the Cristianissimo. I know you don't care to go through smiling ceremonies with these rustling magnates, whom we are not likely to see again; and as they will want to look at the antiquities and the library, perhaps you had better give up your work to-day, and go to see your cousin Brigida."

Romola discerned a wish in this intimation, and immediately assented. But presently, coming back in her hood and mantle, she said, "Oh, what a long breath Florence will take when the gates are flung open, and the last Frenchman is walking out of them! Even you are getting tired, with all your patience, my Tito; confess it. Ah, your head is hot."

He was leaning over his desk, writing, and she had laid her hand on his head, meaning to give a parting caress. The attitude had been a frequent one, and Tito was accustomed, when he felt her hand there, to raise his head, throw himself a little backward, and look up at her. But he felt now as unable to raise his head as if her hand had been a leaden cowl. He spoke instead, in a light tone, as his pen still ran along.

"The French are as ready to go from Florence as the wasps to leave a ripe pear when they have just fastened on it."

Romola, keenly sensitive to the absence of the usual response, took away her hand and said, "I am going, Tito."

"Farewell, my sweet one. I must wait at home. Take Maso with you."

Still Tito did not look up, and Romola went out without saying any more. Very slight things make epochs in married life, and this morning for the first time she admitted to herself not only that Tito had changed, but that he had changed towards her. Did the reason lie in herself? She might perhaps have thought so, if there had not been the facts of the armour and the picture to suggest some external event which was an entire mystery to her.

But Tito no sooner believed that Romola was out of the house than he laid down his pen and looked up, in delightful security from seeing anything else than parchment and broken marble. He was rather disgusted

with himself that he had not been able to look up at Romola and behave to her just as usual. He would have chosen, if he could, to be even more than usually kind; but he could not, on a sudden, master an involuntary shrinking from her, which, by a subtle relation, depended on those very characteristics in him that made him desire not to fail in his marks of affection. He was about to take a step which he knew would arouse her deep indignation: he would have to encounter much that was unpleasant before he could win her forgiveness. And Tito could never find it easy to face displeasure and anger; his nature was one of those most remote from defiance or impudence, and all his inclinations leaned towards preserving Romola's tenderness. He was not tormented by sentimental scruples which, as he had demonstrated to himself by a very rapid course of argument, had no relation to solid utility; but his freedom from scruples did not release him from the dread of what was disagreeable. Unscrupulousness gets rid of much, but not of toothache, or wounded vanity, or the sense of loneliness, against which, as the world at present stands, there is no security but a thoroughly healthy jaw, and a just, loving soul. And Tito was feeling intensely at this moment that no devices could save him from pain in the impending collision with Romola; no persuasive blandness could cushion him against the shock towards which he was being driven like a timid animal urged to a desperate leap by the terror of the tooth and the claw that are close behind it.

The secret feeling he had previously had that the tenacious adherence to Bardo's wishes about the library had become under existing difficulties a piece of sentimental folly, which deprived himself and Romola of substantial advantages, might perhaps never have wrought itself into action but for the events of the past week, which had brought at once the pressure of a new motive and the outlet of a rare opportunity. Nay, it was not till his dread had been aggravated by the sight of Baldassarre looking more like his sane self, not until he had begun to feel that he might be compelled to flee from Florence, that he had brought himself to resolve on using his legal right to sell the library before the great opportunity offered by French and Milanese bidders slipped through his fingers. For if he had to leave Florence he did not want to leave it as a destitute wanderer. He had been used to an agreeable existence, and he wished to carry with him all the means at hand for retaining the same agreeable conditions. He wished among other things to carry Romola with him, and *not*, if possible, to carry any infamy. Success had given him a growing appetite for all the pleasures that depend on an advantageous social position, and at no moment could it look like a temptation to him, but only like a hideous alternative, to decamp under dishonour, even with a bag of diamonds, and incur the life of an adventurer. It was not possible for him to make himself independent even of those Florentines who only greeted him with regard; still less was it possible for him to make himself independent of Romola. She was the wife of his first love—he loved her still; she belonged to that furniture of life which he shrink

from parting with. He winced under her judgment, he felt uncertain how far the revulsion of her feeling towards him might go; and all that sense of power over a wife which makes a husband risk betrayals that a lover never ventures on, would not suffice to counteract Tito's uneasiness. This was the leaden weight which had been too strong for his will, and kept him from raising his head to meet her eyes. Their pure light brought too near him the prospect of a coming struggle. But it was not to be helped: if they had to leave Florence, they must have money; indeed, Tito could not arrange life at all to his mind without a considerable sum of money. And that problem of arranging life to his mind had been the source of all his misdoing. He would have been equal to any sacrifice that was not unpleasant.

The rustling magnates came and went, the bargains had been concluded, and Romola returned home; but nothing grave was said that night. Tito was only gay and chatty, pouring forth to her, as he had not done before, stories and descriptions of what he had witnessed during the French visit. Romola thought she discerned an effort in his liveliness, and, attributing it to the consciousness in him that she had been wounded in the morning, accepted the effort as an act of penitence, inwardly aching a little at that sign of growing distance between them—that there was an offence about which neither of them dared to speak.

The next day Tito remained away from home until late at night. It was a marked day to Romola, for Piero di Cosimo, stimulated to greater industry on her behalf by the fear that he might have been the cause of pain to her in the past week, had sent home her father's portrait. She had propped it against the back of his old chair, and had been looking at it for some time, when the door opened behind her, and Bernardo del Nero came in.

"It is you, godfather! How I wish you had come sooner: it is getting a little dusk," said Romola, going towards him.

"I have just looked in to tell you the good news, for I know Tito is not come yet," said Bernardo. "The French king moves off to-morrow; not before it is high time. There has been another tussle between our people and his soldiers this morning. But there's a chance now of the city getting into order once more and trade going on."

"That is joyful," said Romola. "But it is sudden, is it not? Tito seemed to think yesterday that there was little prospect of the king's going soon."

"He has been well barked at, that's the reason," said Bernardo, smiling. "His own generals opened their throats pretty well, and at last our Signoria sent the mastiff of the city, Fra Girolamo. The Cristianissimo was frightened at that thunder, and has given the order to move. I'm afraid there'll be small agreement among us when he's gone, but, at any rate, all parties are agreed in being glad not to have Florence stifled with soldiery any longer, and the Frate has barked this time to

some purpose. Ah, what is this?" he added, as Romola, clasping him by the arm, led him in front of the picture. "Let us see."

He began to unwind his long scarf while she placed a seat for him.

"Don't you want your spectacles, godfather?" said Romola, in anxiety that he should see just what she saw.

"No, child, no," said Bernardo, uncovering his grey head, as he seated himself with firm erectness. "For seeing at this distance, my old eyes are perhaps better than your young ones. Old men's eyes are like old men's memories; they are strongest for things a long way off."

"It is better than having no portrait," said Romola, apologetically, after Bernardo had been silent a little while. "It is less like him now than the image I have in my mind, but then that might fade with the years." She rested her arm on the old man's shoulder as she spoke, drawn towards him strongly by their common interest in the dead.

"I don't know," said Bernardo. "I almost think I see Bardo as he was when he was young, better than that picture shows him to me as he was when he was old. Your father had a great deal of fire in his eyes when he was young. It was what I could never understand, that he, with his fiery spirit, which seemed much more impatient than mine, could hang over the books and live with shadows all his life. However, he had put his heart into that."

Bernardo gave a slight shrug as he spoke the last words, but Romola discerned in his voice a feeling that accorded with her own.

"And he was disappointed to the last," she said, involuntarily. But immediately fearing lest her words should be taken to imply an accusation against Tito, she went on almost hurriedly, "If we could only see his longest, dearest wish fulfilled just to his mind!"

"Well, so we may," said Bernardo, kindly, rising and putting on his cap. "The times are cloudy now, but fish are caught by waiting. Who knows? When the wheel has turned often enough, I may be Gonfaloniere yet before I die; and no creditor can touch these things." He looked round as he spoke. Then, turning to her, and patting her cheek, said, "And you need not be afraid of my dying; my ghost will claim nothing. I've taken care of that in my will."

Romola seized the hand that was against her cheek, and put it to her lips in silence.

"Haven't you been scolding your husband for keeping away from home so much lately? I see him everywhere but here," said Bernardo, willing to change the subject.

She felt the flush spread over her neck and face as she said, "He has been very much wanted; you know he speaks so well. I am glad to know that his value is understood."

"You are contented, then, Madonna Orgogliosa?" said Bernardo, smiling as he moved to the door.

"Assuredly."

Poor Romola! There was one thing that would have made the pang

of disappointment in her husband harder to bear: it was, that any one should know he gave her cause for disappointment. This might be a woman's weakness, but it is closely allied to a woman's nobleness. She who willingly lifts up the veil of her married life has profaned it from a sanctuary into a vulgar place.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### A REVELATION.

THE next day Romola, like every other Florentine, was excited about the departure of the French. Besides her other reasons for gladness, she had a dim hope, which she was conscious was half superstitious, that those new anxieties about Tito, having come with the burdensome guests, might perhaps vanish with them. The French had been in Florence hardly eleven days, but in that space she had felt more acute unhappiness than she had known in her life before. Tito had adopted the hateful armour on the day of their arrival, and though she could frame no distinct notion why their departure should remove the cause of his fear—though, when she thought of that cause, the image of the prisoner grasping him, as she had seen it in Piero's sketch, urged itself before her and excluded every other—still, when the French were gone, she would be rid of something that was strongly associated with her pain.

Wrapped in her mantle she waited under the loggia at the top of the house, and watched for the glimpses of the troops and the royal retinue passing the bridges on their way to the Porta San Piero, that looks towards Siena and Rome. She even returned to her station when the gates had been closed, that she might feel herself vibrating with the great peal of the bells. It was dusk then, and when at last she descended into the library, she lit her lamp, with the resolution that she would overcome the agitation that had made her idle all day, and sit down to work at her copying of the catalogue. Tito had left home early in the morning, and she did not expect him yet. Before he came she intended to leave the library, and sit in the pretty saloon, with the dancing nymphs and the birds. She had done so every evening since he had objected to the library as chill and gloomy.

To her great surprise, she had not been at work long before Tito entered. Her first thought was, how cheerless he would feel the wide darkness of this great room, with one little oil-lamp burning at the farther end, and the fire nearly out. She almost ran towards him.

"Tito, dearest, I did not know you would come so soon," she said, nervously putting up her white arms to unwind his *becchetto*.

"I am not welcome then?" he said, with one of his brightest smiles, clasping her, but playfully holding his head back from her.

"Tito!" She uttered the word in a tone of pretty, loving reproach, and



then he kissed her fondly, stroked her hair, as his manner was, and seemed not to mind about taking off his mantle yet. Romola quivered with delight. All the emotions of the day had been preparing in her a keener sensitiveness to the return of this habitual manner. "It will come back," she was saying to herself, "the old happiness will perhaps come back. He is like himself again."

Tito was taking great pains to be like himself; his heart was palpitating with anxiety.

"If I had expected you so soon," said Romola, as she at last helped him to take off his wrappings, "I would have had a little festival prepared to this joyful ringing of the bells. I did not mean to be here in the library when you came home."

"Never mind, sweet," he said, carelessly. "Do not think about the fire. Come—come and sit down."

There was a low stool against Tito's chair, and that was Romola's habitual seat when they were talking together. She rested her arm on his knee, as she used to do on her father's, and looked up at him while he spoke. He had never yet noticed the presence of the portrait, and she had not mentioned it—thinking of it all the more.

"I have been enjoying the clang of the bells for the first time, Tito," she began. "I liked being shaken and deafened by them: I fancied I was something like a Bacchante possessed by a divine rage. Are not the people looking very joyful to-night?"

"Joyful after a sour and pious fashion," said Tito, with a shrug. "But, in truth, those who are left behind in Florence have little cause to be joyful; it seems to me, the most reasonable ground of gladness would be to have got out of Florence."

Tito had sounded the desired key-note without any trouble, or appearance of premeditation. He spoke with no emphasis, but he looked grave enough to make Romola ask rather anxiously,

"Why, Tito? Are there fresh troubles?"

"No need of fresh ones, my Romola. There are three strong parties in the city, all ready to fly at each other's throats. And if the Frate's party is strong enough to frighten the other two into silence, as seems most likely, life will be as pleasant and amusing as a funeral. They have the plan of a great Council simmering already; and if they get it, the man who sings sacred lauds the loudest will be the most eligible for office. And besides that, the city will be so drained by the payment of this great subsidy to the French king, and by the war to get back Pisa, that the prospect would be dismal enough without the rule of fanatics. On the whole, Florence will be a delightful place for those worthies who entertain themselves in the evening by going into crypts and lashing themselves; but for everything else, the exiles have the best of it. For my own part, I have been thinking seriously that we should be wise to quit Florence, my Romola."

She started. "Tito, how could we leave Florence? Surely you do

not think I could leave it—at least, not yet—not for a long while.” She had turned cold and trembling, and did not find it quite easy to speak. Tito must know the reasons she had in her mind.

“That is all a fabric of your own imagination, my sweet one. Your secluded life has made you lay such false stress on a few things. You know I used to tell you, before we were married, that I wished we were somewhere else than in Florence. If you had seen more places and more people, you would know what I mean when I say that there is something in the Florentines that reminds me of their cutting spring winds. I like people who take life less eagerly; and it would be good for my Romola, too, to see a new life. I should like to dip her a little in the soft waters of forgetfulness.”

He leaned forward and kissed her brow, and laid his hand on her fair hair again; but she felt his caress no more than if he had kissed a mask. She was too much agitated by the sense of the distance between their minds to be conscious that his lips touched her.

“Tito, it is not because I suppose Florence is the pleasantest place in the world that I desire not to quit it. It is because I—because we have to see my father’s wish fulfilled. My godfather is old—he is seventy-one—we could not leave it to him.”

“It is precisely those superstitions which hang about your mind like bedimmed clouds, my Romola, that make one great reason why I could wish we were two hundred leagues from Florence. I am obliged to take care of you in opposition to your own will: if those dear eyes, that look so tender, see falsely, I must see for them, and save my wife from wasting her life in disappointing herself by impracticable dreams.”

Romola sat silent and motionless: she could not blind herself to the direction in which Tito’s words pointed: he wanted to persuade her that they might get the library deposited in some monastery, or take some other ready means to rid themselves of a task, and a tie to Florence; and she was determined never to submit her mind to his judgment on this question of duty to her father; she was inwardly prepared to encounter any sort of pain in resistance. But the determination was kept latent in these first moments by the heart-crushing sense that now at last she and Tito must be confessedly divided in their wishes. He was glad of her silence, for, much as he had feared the strength of her feeling, it was impossible for him, shut up in the narrowness that hedges in all merely clever, unimpassioned men, not to over-estimate the persuasiveness of his own arguments. His conduct did not look ugly to himself, and his imagination did not suffice to show him exactly how it would look to Romola. He went on in the same gentle, remonstrating tone.

“You know, dearest—your own clear judgment always showed you—that the notion of isolating a collection of books and antiquities, and attaching a single name to them for ever, was one that had no valid, substantial good for its object: and yet more, one that was liable to be defeated in a thousand ways. See what has become of the Medici collections! And, for my

part, I consider it even blameworthy to entertain those petty views of appropriation: why should any one be reasonably glad that Florence should possess the benefits of learned research and taste more than any other city? I understand your feeling about the wishes of the dead; but wisdom puts a limit to these sentiments, else lives might be continually wasted in that sort of futile devotion—like praising deaf gods for ever. You gave your life to your father while he lived; why should you demand more of yourself?"

"Because it was a trust," said Romola, in a low but distinct voice. "He trusted me, he trusted you, Tito. I did not expect you to feel anything else about it—to feel as I do—but I did expect you to feel that."

"Yes, dearest, of course I should feel it on a point where your father's real welfare or happiness was concerned; but there is no question of that now. If we believed in purgatory, I should be as anxious as you to have masses said; and if I believed it could pain your father to see his library preserved and used in a rather different way from what he had set his mind on, I should share the strictness of your views. But a little philosophy should teach us to rid ourselves of those air-woven fetters that mortals hang round themselves, spending their lives in misery under the mere imagination of weight. Your mind, which seizes ideas so readily, my Romola, is able to discriminate between substantial good and these brain-wrought fantasies. Ask yourself, dearest, what possible good can these books and antiquities do stowed together under your father's name in Florence, more than they would do if they were divided or carried elsewhere? Nay, is not the very dispersion of such things in hands that know how to value them one means of extending their usefulness? This rivalry of Italian cities is very petty and illiberal. The loss of Constantinople was the gain of the whole civilized world."

Romola was still too thoroughly under the painful pressure of the new revelation Tito was making of himself, for her resistance to find any strong vent. As that fluent talk fell on her ears there was a rising contempt within her, which only made her more conscious of her bruised despairing love, her love for the Tito she had married and believed in. Her nature, possessed with the energies of strong emotion, recoiled from this hopelessly shallow readiness which professed to appropriate the widest sympathies and had no pulse for the nearest. She still spoke like one who was restrained from showing all she felt. She had only drawn away her arm from his knee and sat with her hands clasped before her, cold and motionless as locked waters.

"You talk of substantial good, Tito! Are faithfulness, and love, and sweet grateful memories, no good? Is it no good that we should keep our silent promises on which others build because they believe in our love and truth? Is it no good that a just life should be justly honoured? Or, is it good that we should harden our hearts against all the wants and hopes of those who have depended on us? What good can belong to men who have such souls? To talk cleverly, perhaps, and find soft

couches for themselves, and live and die with their base selves as their best companions."

Her voice had gradually risen till there was a ring of scorn in the last words; she made a slight pause, but he saw there were other words quivering on her lips, and he chose to let them come.

"I know of no good for cities or the world if they are to be made up of such beings. But I am not thinking of other Italian cities and the whole civilized world—I am thinking of my father, and of my love and sorrow for him, and of his just claims on us. I would give up anything else, Tito,—I would leave Florence,—what else did I live for but for him and you? But I will not give up that duty. What have I to do with your arguments? It was a yearning of *his* heart, and therefore it is a yearning of mine."

Her voice, from having been tremulous, had become full and firm. She felt that she had been urged on to say all that it was needful for her to say. She thought, poor thing, there was nothing harder to come than this struggle against Tito's suggestions as against the meaner part of herself.

He had begun to see clearly that he could not persuade her into assent: he must take another course, and show her that the time for resistance was past. That, at least, would put an end to further struggle; and if the disclosure were not made by himself to-night, to-morrow it must be made in another way. That necessity nerved his courage; and his experience of her affectionateness and unexpected submissiveness, ever since their marriage until now, encouraged him to hope that, at last, she would accommodate herself to what had been his will.

"I am sorry to hear you speak in that spirit of blind persistence, my Romola," he said, quietly, "because it obliges me to give you pain. But I partly foresaw your opposition, and as a prompt decision was necessary, I avoided that obstacle, and decided without consulting you. The very care of a husband for his wife's interest compels him to that separate action sometimes—even when he has such a wife as you, my Romola."

She turned her eyes on him in breathless inquiry.

"I mean," he said, answering her look, "that I have arranged for the transfer, both of the books and antiquities, where they will find the highest use and value. The books have been bought for the Duke of Milan, the marbles and bronzes and the rest are going to France: and both will be protected by the stability of a great Power, instead of remaining in a city which is exposed to ruin."

Before he had finished speaking, Romola had started from her seat, and stood up looking down at him, with tightened hands falling before her, and, for the first time in her life, with a flash of fierceness in her scorn and anger.

"You have *sold* them?" she asked, as if she distrusted her ears.

"I have," said Tito, quailing a little. The scene was unpleasant—the descending scorn already scorched him.

"You are a treacherous man!" she said, with something grating in her voice, as she looked down at him.

She was silent for a minute, and he sat still, feeling that ingenuity was powerless just now. Suddenly she turned away, and said, in an agitated tone, "It may be hindered—I am going to my godfather."

In an instant Tito started up, went to the door, locked it, and took out the key. It was time for all the masculine predominance that was latent in him to show itself. But he was not angry; he only felt that the moment was eminently unpleasant, and that when this scene was at an end he should be glad to keep away from Romola for a little while. But it was absolutely necessary first that she should be reduced to passiveness.

"Try to calm yourself a little, Romola," he said, leaning in the easiest attitude possible against a pedestal under the bust of a grim old Roman. Not that he was inwardly easy: his heart palpitated a little with a moral dread, against which no chain-armour could be found. He had locked in his wife's anger and scorn, but he had been obliged to lock himself in with it; and his blood did not rise with contest—his olive cheek was perceptibly paled.

Romola had paused and turned her eyes on him as she saw him take his stand and lodge the key in his scarsella. Her eyes were flashing, and her whole frame seemed to be possessed by impetuous force that wanted to leap out in some deed. All the crushing pain of disappointment in her husband, which had made the strongest part of her consciousness a few minutes before, was annihilated by the vehemence of her indignation. She could not care in this moment that the man she was despising as he leaned there in his loathsome beauty—she could not care that he was her husband; she could only feel that she despised him. The pride and fierceness of the old Bardi blood had been thoroughly awaked in her for the first time.

"Try at least to understand the fact," said Tito, "and do not seek to take futile steps which may be fatal. It is of no use for you to go to your godfather. Messer Bernardo cannot reverse what I have done. Only sit down. You would hardly wish, if you were quite yourself, to make known to any third person what passes between us in private."

Tito knew that he had touched the right fibre there. But she did not sit down; she was too unconscious of her body voluntarily to change her attitude.

"Why can it not be reversed?" she said, after a pause. "Nothing is moved yet."

"Simply because the sale has been concluded by written agreement; the purchasers have left Florence, and I hold the bonds for the purchase-money."

"If my father had suspected you of being a faithless man," said Romola, in a tone of bitter scorn, which insisted on darting out before she could say anything else, "he would have placed the library safely out of your power. But death overtook him too soon, and when you were sure

his ear was deaf, and his hand stiff, you robbed him." She paused an instant, and then said, with gathered passion, "Have you robbed somebody else, who is *not* dead? Is that the reason you wear armour?"

Romola had been driven to utter the words as men are driven to use the lash of the horsewhip. At first, Tito felt horribly cowed; it seemed to him that the disgrace he had been dreading would be worse than he had imagined it. But soon there was a reaction: such power of dislike and resistance as there was within him was beginning to rise against a wife whose voice seemed like the herald of a retributive fate. Her, at least, his quick mind told him that he might master.

"It is useless," he said, coolly, "to answer the words of madness, Romola. Your peculiar feeling about your father has made you mad at this moment. Any rational person looking at the case from a due distance will see that I have taken the wisest course. Apart from the influence of your exaggerated feelings on him, I am convinced that Messer Bernardo would be of that opinion."

"He would not!" said Romola. "He lives in the hope of seeing my father's wish exactly fulfilled. We spoke of it together only yesterday. He will help me yet. Who are these men to whom you have sold my father's property?"

"There is no reason why you should not be told, except that it signifies little. The Count di San Severino and the Seneschal de Beaucaire are now on their way with the king to Siena."

"They may be overtaken and persuaded to give up their purchase," said Romola, eagerly, her anger beginning to be surmounted by anxious thought.

"No, they may not," said Tito, with cool decision.

"Why?"

"Because I do not choose that they should."

"But if you were paid the money?—we will pay you the money," said Romola. No words could have disclosed more fully her sense of alienation from Tito; but they were spoken with less of bitterness than of anxious pleading. And he felt stronger, for he saw that the first impulse of fury was past.

"No, my Romola. Understand that such thoughts as these are impracticable. You would not, in a reasonable moment, ask your godfather to bury three thousand florins in addition to what he has already paid on the library. I think your pride and delicacy would shrink from that."

She began to tremble and turn cold again with discouragement, and sank down on the carved chest near which she was standing. He went on in a clear voice, under which she shuddered, as if it had been a narrow cold stream coursing over a hot cheek.

"Moreover, it is not my will that Messer Bernardo should advance the money, even if the project were not an utterly wild one. And I beg you to consider, before you take any step or utter any word on the subject,

what will be the consequences of your placing yourself in opposition to me, and trying to exhibit your husband in the odious light which your own distempered feelings cast over him. What object will you serve by injuring me with Messer Bernardo? The event is irrevocable, the library is sold, and you are my wife."

Every word was spoken for the sake of a calculated effect, for his intellect was urged into the utmost activity by the danger of the crisis. He knew that Romola's mind would take in rapidly enough all the wide meaning of his speech. He waited and watched her in silence.

She had turned her eyes from him and was looking on the ground, and in that way she sat for several minutes. When she spoke, her voice was quite altered,—it was quiet and cold.

"I have one thing to ask."

"Ask anything that I can do without injuring us both, Romola."

"That you will give me that portion of the money which belongs to my godfather, and let me pay him."

"I must have some assurance from you, first, of the attitude you intend to take towards me."

"Do you believe in assurances, Tito?" she said, with a tinge of returning bitterness.

"From you, I do."

"I will do you no harm. I shall disclose nothing. I will say nothing to pain him or you. You say truly, the event is irrevocable."

"Then I will do what you desire to-morrow morning."

"To-night, if possible," said Romola, "that we may not speak of it again."

"It is possible," he said, moving towards the lamp, while she sat still, looking away from him with absent eyes.

Presently he came and bent down over her, to put a piece of paper into her hand. "You will receive something in return, you are aware, my Romola?" he said, gently, not minding so much what had passed, now he was secure; and feeling able to try and propitiate her.

"Yes," she said, taking the paper, without looking at him, "I understand."

"And you will forgive me, my Romola, when you have had time to reflect." He just touched her brow with his lips, but she took no notice, and seemed really unconscious of the act.

She was aware that he unlocked the door and went out. She moved her head and listened. The great door of the court opened and shut again. She started up as if some sudden freedom had come, and going to her father's chair where his picture was propped, fell on her knees before it, and burst into sobs.



## Campaigning with General Pope.

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IN August, 1862, I—a "special correspondent"—was sent to join the army of General Pope, then concentrating in the Piedmont region of Virginia, and in the county of Fauquier.

I waited upon the Chief of Staff, at the General's city quarters, on the morning of my arrival in Washington. A plain brick residence, with shady side-walk, guarded by a volunteer soldier in slovenly blouse and breeches, and constantly beset by aids, waggoners, and sutlers, had been allotted to the commander of the "Army of Virginia," and in the upper story I found him in civil dress, smoking a cigar. Tall, corpulent, and athletic, with keen dark eyes, and beard and hair black as midnight, General John Pope had all the air of a commander.

Vain, imprudent, and not proverbially truthful; but shrewd, active, and skilled in the rules of warfare, Pope could be great and little too. He was clothed with scrupulous neatness, his hair and beard were carefully dressed, his cigars exquisite in flavour. He spoke much and rapidly, chiefly of himself; swore roundly at intervals, was petulant at trifles, and sanguine of impending success. I remember that some one asked him, incidentally, where he should make his final head-quarters? "In the saddle, sir," said Pope, bending his dark eyes upon the questioner.

I found no trouble in securing military passes and railroad transportation for myself and horse. Others were less fortunate; and some, whose claim was that of love, duty, or charity, were coldly rebuffed. Two women for example, wives of private soldiers, had come from the remote State of Maine to see their sick husbands in the hospital at Fredericksburg. They were weak, pretty creatures, and looked strangely out of place among the rough soldiery that thronged the inspector's office. A dozen rude glances discomposed them, as they made application; and at the contemptuous refusal, they turned their heads and wept silently. A great burly cavalry-man, whose awkward honesty I shall never forget, so far forgot his position as to condemn most lustily the discipline that obstructed such gentle missions. He was at once put under arrest, and the poor wives were removed from the office.

The morning was bright and young when I strapped blankets and baggage upon the back of my pony, and went at an easy trot across the Long Bridge, towards Alexandria. The clear sky, peculiar to American rivers, shone bright over the Potomac, and the countless forts that cluster upon Arlington Heights looked down through thousands of tents upon the transports that crowded mistily about the distant wharves. Arlington House, the stately residence of the Confederate General Lee, stood

amidst thick pines and cedars, with batteries planted upon the lawn and a signal look-out upon the roof. Dark masses of horsemen could be seen moving over the heights, and the Federal flag floated everywhere.

Midway on the bridge a train surprised me, and the frightened colt that I bestrode very nearly finished my part of the campaign. In respect to horses, I had been unfortunate from the first. My original quadruped would go at all only when spurred, and if spurred invariably ran away. My second had an antipathy to newspapers, and refused to eat his oats if close to any paper whatsoever. I tied him ultimately to a waggon-wheel at Harrison's Bar, and have had a curious impression ever since that he is still spinning round.

The present animal was young, nervous, and full of blood and sinew. I did not feel quite safe with him upon ordinary occasions; but at the crack of musketry, the roll of a drum, or the gleaming of standards, sabres, and bayonets, he grew positively wild, and several times drew vituperations from officers and men whom he had almost trampled.

The feeling that my vocation had somewhat of peril about it gave tone and spirit to my ride. When I had climbed Arlington Cliffs I turned a moment to regard the city, whose colossal buildings glistened in the sunlight. The Capitol sat enthroned on the right; the long façade of the Treasury building in the centre, and on the left, the stern, severe outlines of the President's mansion. Between, lay the city, incongruously built, and down by the slope of the river the broken shaft of the monument to Washington.

In that Capitol lay the heart of the Federal people; and to preserve it inviolate they had piled fort upon fort, added battalion to battalion, and cannon to cannon. There was no approach to the city that could not be commanded by a hundred guns.

Alexandria, a prim Virginian town, overrun with infantry in blue, cavalry in yellow, and artillerymen in red, looked very sombre as I rode up its main avenue. The old race of Alexandrians had moved away, and the Hebrews were installed in their ancient shops. A few women of the former régime sat lonesomely at their windows, but others, of a widely different character, flaunted in rouge and silk through groups of soldiers on the side-paths. There were drinking-dens set up in famous homesteads, spruce modern mansions were turned into barracks and hospitals, and army cattle browsed in quiet domestic grass-yards and gardens. In the suburbs many horses had been gutted in pure hate and wantonness. I saw, among others, the residence of a Confederate colonel that had been twice fired, and its noble lawn with its maple-trees given over to axe and cattle. I rode through a gap in the broken fence, splashing mud at every hoof, and my horse put his head through a rent in the dwelling. Not Hun or Goth could have done more to destroy. The floors were broken; lascivious pencillings profaned the hospitable chambers; the cellar was full of rain-water; and carrion had been tossed into the well.

I stopped at the Marshall House, where rash young Ellsworth perished, and found that the stairways stained with his blood had been broken up by the new proprietor—a brutal-looking Zouave—and sold, piece by piece, to relic-hunters. The City Hotel, an antique building, where Washington and his contemporaries were wont to feast and dance, accommodated me with a bed. The waiters were surly negroes, disposed to somnolence at inopportune times, and absolutely deaf to bells and halloos. On my way next morning to the railway dépôt, I passed the slave-pen, a barbarous place, enclosed by a spiked wall. Here refractory negroes were confined of old, and those about to be sent to Southern markets. Manacles and chains were said to have been found here.

With some trouble I got my colt into a cattle-car, and my pass having been countersigned by a Government agent, I secured a seat in an open carriage, among recruits, convalescents, and civilians, all bound for Warrenton. Without a moment's delay, we were being whirled due south, through a country depopulated and ravaged, past negro huts where loitering soldiers sunned themselves, and hill-top dwellings where red-garbed Zouaves flitted by the broken doors like bloody apparitions. The corn-fields of a summer gone by lay rotting on the slopes; there were the remains of camps in all the valleys; sentries lurked in glens and copses; long lines of supply-teams laboured up cross-road ruts; and guns frowned down from the tall hills, commanding the track for miles. We left Fairfax Court-house on our right, and tugging up steep grades, whistling through patches of forest, crossing gorges and rivulets, came at last to Bull Run, consecrated by the first great struggle of the war, and to be again made memorable.

With strange emotions I beheld the deep and turgid waters of this creek—about as wide as the Dee at Chester, or the Thames at Oxford—flowing sluggishly through a rocky defile, the crests on either side perhaps two hundred feet from the water, and shut in by thick woods of pine, oak, and chestnut. The valley had a gaunt and ancient look; and as the scream of the engine reverberated along its borders, hybrid mules, that were drinking at a ford, raised up their heads and brayed. Two miles farther on we reached Manassas Junction, formerly the head-quarters of Beauregard, and the winter quarters until recently of the Southern army. As the train stopped close to a rough dépôt and engine-house, I perceived a man, a little distance off, sighting a cannon directly at the car in which I was seated. With considerable agitation I leaped to the ground, but as both figure and piece remained motionless I ventured to approach. The affair proved to be a log, or "Quaker gun," mounted upon waggon-wheels, and the gunner some stuffed clothing, crowned with an old hat.

If the world contains any place particularly appropriate for a battle site, it is the plain of Manassas. A high, broad, table-land, with Bull Run forming in front an almost impassable defence, reaches, in the far distance, to the Blue Ridge. Through a narrow cleft in the mountains comes the Manassas Gap Railway from the Shenandoah Valley, uniting at the junc-

tion with the Range and Alexandria Railway, direct from Richmond and Charlottesville. By the former, the troops of Johnston, through the feebleness of the Federal leader Patterson, came to the rescue of the Confederates, and redeemed their fortunes. They marched from the junction to the field, column upon column, and every whistle of their locomotives carried terror to the Federal hearts. The Confederate ramparts will remain for centuries. They are built chiefly of barrels of earth, covered with mould, securely ditched, and protected by abattis. An old barn to the left of the railway is thus entrenched, and its walls pierced for sharpshooters. An orchard and house close by are similarly defended, and every elevation, as far as the eye can see, in the direction of Washington, is marked by a redan, a lunette, a stockade, a breastwork, or a rifle-pit. The house where Beauregard abode had been turned into a commissary depôt. A dozen rude structures for sutlers' stores adjoined the railway, and these were fancifully inscribed "New England House," "Fire Zouave's Delight," "Davis' Head," &c. Heaps of shell and ball stood here and there; down a medley of sidings Government locomotives were hauling ponderous freights; regimental mail-messengers came and went through swarms of pie-women, newspaper-boys, pea-nut vendors, guides, gossips, and loiterers; while beyond there, the Blue Ridge curled huge and misty, the dumb witness of a score of battles, past and to come. The whole region hereabout is desolate, and the few hulks of dwellings that remain stand bare, unenclosed, and open to wind and rain—their great windowy eyes seeming to reveal chapters of change and misery. "Catlett's," subsequently commemorated by a dashing cavalry raid, is simply a white frame-house and station, at a crossing about eight miles from Manassas. The railroad here, as elsewhere, goes through fields and forests, and is nowhere fenced or enclosed. Wild pigs started from coverts as the train went whooping by, and carrion vultures by thousands wheeled aloft.

Switching off to the right, at Warrenton Junction, we reached Warrenton at three o'clock, one of the pleasantest hamlets in Virginia, and in its palmy days populated by about two thousand people. Here General McDowell, the Federal leader at Bull Run, had his quarters, and the town was garrisoned by the 9th New York regiment. Other regiments had encampments on adjacent knolls and spurs of the Blue Ridge, and the depôt close by the town bristled with daily reinforcements of men, muskets, and ammunition. The Federals had certainly spared no expenditure to supply the army of Pope with all essentials of warfare. I was struck particularly with the railway arrangements. Locomotives and cars were branded "United States Military Railroads," for the Government had seized all the roads in the land. Campaigning over so great a country is futile without rail facilities, and the Confederates have but to burn a bridge to delay their adversaries for weeks.

At the terminus, flour-barrels were heaped by acres. A great pound adjoined, where quartermasters' horses were kept. Hams, army pork, and barrels of beef were piled in mountainous heaps, and of pilot-bread or

camp-biscuit there seemed no end. Teamsters and teams innumerable surrounded the train as it came to its destination. Idle officers elbowed hither and thither, and horsemen that seemed to have nothing to do rode recklessly into motley crowds of citizens, negroes, and soldiers. Warrenton was, in a word, a cozy, sleepy village that had, unwittingly, become a depôt for a great army. The innocent burghers who planned its railroad had, in the act, made their streets highways, and their homes shelters, for the countless tribes of the North.

There was something mournfully embarrassed in the faces of the residents. Their sons were in the Southern army, their daughters at home, and they, a few old men, among thousands of armed and hostile strangers. Their court-house, a cumbrous old edifice, had passed into the hands of the town provost-marshal. Their seminary—a new modern pile—was set apart for General Pope, soon to arrive. Their churches had been transformed into hospitals for the Federal army, and many of their shops and residences had been seized for military purposes. Their negroes, emboldened by the presence of “de Nawdeners,” had refused to work, and hundreds became servants to Federal officers. They were prohibited from leaving the village, and sutlers were forbidden to trade with them. More than all, an order had been issued that those who should not take the oath of allegiance before a specified day should be removed beyond the Federal lines. They gathered of afternoons at the “Warren Green,” a village inn, and talked in undertones. They went to their homes humbly, as if doubtful of their right to own anything, and a small favour from a Federal was accepted in mute astonishment. They read the papers, doubtful what to reject, what to believe. They made sales of butter and milk, and were paid in Federal money, which they regarded dolorously. They introduced spruce officers to their daughters, but trembled lest the rashness of the young ladies should bring insult upon both.

It is due to the Federals to say that they were generally scrupulous and respectful. It must be said of the young ladies and their papas, that, when their fears had been allayed, both became very bold. After a time, “Dixie” and the “Bonnie Blue Flag” were heard of evenings, and commentaries upon Yankee courage and character ventured of afternoons. It then came out that many residents of the place had been in the Confederate service, and among them the commander of the famous “Black Horse Cavalry,” which made panic at Bull Run. I saw and spoke with the latter—a slight severe person, who was a little boastful—and also with a youth named Bragg, who said that he “was at Fahfax, suh. Yes, suh! By G—d, I was at Fahfax, when Tompkins chawged, with his smart hossmen, suh! We fawmed in awdaw across the main street, and it would have wawmed yoh hawt, suh, to see them tumble!” As the gentleman made this observation in the presence of some twenty Federals, I thought either that he was very bold, or they very forbearing.

Good order generally prevailed in the village. There was some little drunkenness among teamsters, but the provost-marshal had a keen scent for spirits, and many hundred casks were dragged to light and emptied. I don't know why, but I particularly remember the village pump—a staunch old sentry—surrounded by cavalry-men watering their nags. Of evenings I sat upon the upper portico of the inn, smoking my cigar, and heard the ringing challenge of the patrols below. In the graveyard, at the edge of the town, slept two hundred Confederates slain at Bull Run. Strolling among the graves, each marked with a wooden slab, I came upon the inscription, "Two Union Soldiers." It was a beautiful tribute from foe to foe.

After a week passed actively at Warrenton, I received an invitation from General McDowell's staff officers to spend a night at White Sulphur Springs, their new head-quarters, seven miles on the way to Culpepper. Pope had meantime arrived at Warrenton; the locomotive that accompanied him was dressed with flags. Truly, he was the vainest of the vain!

On a clear still evening I resumed my journey, in the company of three intelligent officers. Our way toward the Springs lay over a broad stone turnpike; through wood and ford; past deserted toll-houses and military despatch stations, where fleet horses stood saddled in the moonlight; up and down hills; by military paths cut through grass-fields; and corduroy roads that led across swamps and quicksands. We broke upon camps concealed in copses, and saw the blaze of sabres as dark horsemen sonorously challenged. Couriers galloped by in the imperfect light, and vanished like spectres. We heard serenades floating from far-off head-quarters, and bugles that echoed sadly in the distance. At last the great hotel of the Springs appeared, and riding through dark avenues of trees and cottages, we came upon the broad park or lawn. The General's tent was pointed out to me, pitched under an elm. He was writing by candle-light.

Harsh, disappointed, ambitious, McDowell was kind to few and little beloved. He was unpopular with many of his aides, and regarded by the Confederates as at heart favourable to their cause. I believed him to be a better soldier than McClellan, and quite as faithful.

Giving our horses to negro attendants, we adjourned to a cottage close to the spring, for many years the summer abode of Chief Justice Taney. Coffee and savoury beef formed the staple of our meal, and pipes and raw whisky found us seated on the piazza long after the hush of midnight. A few of McDowell's aides belonged to the regular United States army, but there were several foreigners, and among them Count St. Alb, an Austrian adventurer. As I lay on the floor that night, wrapped in a blanket, I little thought that the ancient hotel was soon to be consigned to the flames, and the road by which I came to be marked with brand and blood.

Taking an early sulphur-bath, I made my respects to General McDowell

next morning, and had crossed the North Rappahannock or Hedgemain River, before ten o'clock, on the way to Culpepper. The country was cool, woody, and high, bordered by mountains. The tenements were a mile or more apart, and the settlements few and paltry. I passed some regiments marching towards Culpepper, and the waggon-trains reached for miles continuously. At most farmhouse-gates white flags were hung out, signifying neutrality; but there was much straggling from regiments, and under pretences of thirst and fatigue many soldiers troubled the women and children. The German troops of Generals Blenker and Carl Schurz were renowned for thieving. They frequently cut the throats of sheep and cattle in pure wantonness.

At two o'clock I crossed Hazel River, by a covered bridge, and lunched at a secluded place on its shores. For dessert I swam to the other side. At four o'clock I entered Culpepper, the rendezvous of McDowell's corps, a petty village, containing a stone court-house, where I found staples and chains in the prisoners' dock. The direct railroad between Alexandria and Richmond passes by the place, and twenty miles below Culpepper bridges, the river Rapidan, or South Rappahannock, on whose banks lay the Confederate army of Stonewall Jackson.

A town so sombre as Culpepper I have never known. The shops were all closed. The clergymen had all retired save one, and as he continued to pray publicly for Jefferson Davis, he was warned to desist. There was not a single able-bodied man remaining out of a population of twelve hundred; and the women were unusually outspoken and mischievous. Coffee was worth six shillings a pound, whisky thirty shillings a gallon. Absolute starvation prevailed among the residents; and I have given as much as a shilling for an ear of green (Indian) corn. A wretched meal might be had at one of the hotels for four shillings, and board at five guineas a week. The table, at meals, was kept cool by a series of fans, pendent from the ceiling, put in motion by a small black boy, who pulled a string at the far end of the room. Said boy, fond of sleep, fell into frequent relapses, and was brought to consciousness only when a knife was flung angrily at him. Cavalry skirmishes were of frequent occurrence in the neighbourhood of the town, and prisoners were daily brought into Culpepper. From these I gleaned an estimate of the Confederate strength; they evidently outnumbered the Federals. For the first time the idea struck me that Pope's advance was intended to divert attention from McClellan, while the latter should evacuate the peninsula. Apprised of the weakness of the invaders, the Confederates, doubtless, fathomed their design. Jackson concluded to cross the Rapidan and assume the offensive, expecting, before McClellan should reinforce Pope, to cripple or capture the latter's command, and dash into Maryland and Washington. He was to be followed by the whole Confederate army, probably two hundred thousand strong.

We received the first tidings of his advance, incredulously, at Culpepper. A body of New Jersey cavalry came pell-mell into town on a Friday afternoon, reporting the rebels at Barrett's Ford, with immense adjuncts



of cannon and cavalry. Pope ordered them under arrest, and the ridiculous spectacle was witnessed of eight or ten provost-officers escorting a whole regiment of disarmed cavalry to head-quarters.

If the news should be true, it would be most inopportune. Banks's command was mainly at Little Washington, thirty miles distant, and Sigel's at Sperryville, quite as far. The remaining corps, that of McDowell, consisted of two divisions; but a large portion of one was stationed at Fredericksburgh, where also were General Burnside's troops. Word was at once telegraphed for Sigel and Banks to come up in light equipment; and with all speed Crawford's brigade was thrown out toward Gordonsville, followed by McDowell's command, as a reserve.

I mounted my horse at three o'clock, and galloped excitedly out upon the Orange turnpike, hoping to overtake Crawford before dusk. The roads in every direction were marked by multitudinous hoofs, and I took the wrong course. After riding at high speed for an hour, I came upon a farm-house. Two men, in butternut suits, were chopping wood in the side yard, and I called out,

"Has Crawford's brigade passed this way?"

"Who's Crawford?"

"Have no troops gone by to-day?"

"None since yester mornin'—the Prince William Cavalry."

"Isn't this the way to the Rapidan?"

"Rapidan! You're sot straight for Richmond, and ole Stonewall ain't two miles ahead."

I needed no further intelligence, but galloped as if winged, some miles to the rear, and came up with Crawford at five o'clock.

To see an army marching to the battle-field is strangely pleasant; but those who imagine a dress-parade have something to learn. So far as my experience goes, a march is a very disorderly affair. One of Crawford's regiments was resting under arms; lying flat in the road, sitting bow-legged under hedges, playing cards in the shade of trees, searching in hollows of fields for cool water, clubbing green apples in orchards, smoking briar-wood pipes, imbibing from long-necked bottles; and many were fast asleep. Two regiments were moving on; the field-officers lazily walking their horses; the ammunition-waggons, laden with knapsacks, bringing up the rear; the troops in body, but each keeping step as he chose, and disposing of his musket as he liked.

I was a subject of fruitful commentary to the wags in the ranks.

"Our special artist!" says one, significantly.

"Give the 55th a good puff!" says another.

"Bully boy reporter!" yells a third.

A number of those on the march roared staves of songs. A full regiment sang with stentorian lungs:—

John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave,—  
His soul's marching on!

Glory, Hallelujah!

"Hollo, Jim Smith! carry some o' my crackers!" "Billy, boy, is you after ole Jeff?" "Ay, ay! boh! That's so Roachy!" "Hyip! Hyip! Hooroar!" "Tig-r-r-r!" Such were the medley exclamations that broke from men soon to stand within the grip of death. A few had anxious faces, thinking perhaps of home. A few were manfully silent, conscious of impending hazards, but firm and courageous; but the mass were going to their graves in procession, thoughtless, flippant, and hardened. At odd times, the drum corps beat "The girl I left behind me," when hundreds began to jig and to amble. Brave drummer boys! I have seen a corps of them, not one of them above fourteen years of age, serenely making music when corpses lay thickly around them, and the shock of battalions made the earth tremble.

As we advanced, regiments of cavalry returning reported that the enemy was hard by. The infantry at once broke into prolonged cheers, and the brigade band commenced, "Hail Columbia!" Much of the Federal cavalry was wretchedly made up; but there was a Maine regiment of broad, long-armed swordsmen, whose equals I have never seen. In this regiment, the horses of each company were of a distinct colour. There was a regiment of lancers, likewise, whose pennons gave them a picturesque appearance. They were noted mainly for tumbling from their saddles. Ambulances followed the brigade; and many a cheek paled in contemplation of these sombre vehicles.

When about five miles out of Culpepper, we came to the base of Cedar, or Slaughter's Mountain. Ambulances were here wheeled into a field, batteries unlimbered and advanced, and infantry formed in double line across the country, with skirmishers thrown out in front. Disorder ceased; discipline prevailed. The sun set upon four thousand men, lying vigilantly upon their arms, and all looking through the twilight at a point on the mountain, where, from the roof of a white house, floated a speck of canvas—the Southern flag.

I ventured to a neighbouring dwelling, and, bursting the bolts of a granary, fed my horse with corn. Some Indian bread and a lump of pork formed my own supper; and wrapping a blanket about me, I laid my head upon my saddle and slept through a chilly and fretful night. The fog had risen from Cedar Mountain when I woke, and the flag still waved defiantly over Slaughter's house. My attention was called to a battery half-way up the ascent, and I made out with the glass a signal station on the peak.

A little in the rear of the Federal advance ran a tiny creek, and a tinier tributary trickled down a ravine from the hills. Between these streams, in a great corn-field, rested the Federal infantry; to the right, in an old wheatfield, the field-pieces were planted; and skirmishers deployed still farther to the right, in a field of stone-heaps and brush. Profiting by the pause before the battle, I rode back to Culpepper, and found the troops of Banks and Sigel coming into town, having been in motion all night. The little village was crowded with dragoons, supply waggons,

and ambulances. Regiments unending poured in solid order through the main street, wild with ardour and enthusiasm. Full bands intermingled their peals, quartermasters cursed their teamsters, and teamsters cursed their mules. Standards blended—now the Shamrock with the Red, White, and Blue; now the Highland Thistle with the regulation colours. Teutons in long array came close upon thousands of Celts, followed by the tall, angular Yankee, and the stalwart lumbermen from the Alleghanies and the Adirondacks. I recognized, at two o'clock, surrounded by his staff, the feverish, emaciated face of Franz Siegel—the idol of the German Americans, who boast that he never lost a battle.

At three o'clock, we heard the first gun. Every heart leaped up. I realized at that time the wonderful fidelity of Byron's battle picture, at Waterloo, in my own impressions, as well as in the scenes enacted around me. There was truly mounting in hot haste. Horses pricked up their ears and vigorously neighed. Women, with pale lips, sat at windows, waiting for the next peal. The negroes exclaimed, lugubriously, "De Lord a' massa!" Regiments broke into double quick, as if fearful that they would be too late for the fray. If any absolute cowardice existed among the Federal troops that day, I did not see it. For my part, full of the fever of the hour, I threw myself upon my wearied horse, and spurred him at a mad pace in the direction of the field.

To describe the battle of Cedar Mountain I do not pretend. The affair opened in due manner by sharp skirmishing. Banks finally advanced a brigade to clear a corner of wood where skirmishers were concealed; the effort was resisted; and at four o'clock ten thousand men on each side were engaged. The irregular "rat-tat-tat" of file-firing was alternated at intervals by the roar of a volley. Cannon pealed incessantly. The Confederate batteries, four hundred feet high on the hills, threw shell with fearful accuracy, and the Federals made three desperate efforts to take them with the bayonet. Profiting by their repulse and confusion, the adversary moved forward through thick woods, and from edges of timber poured dreadful volleys of musketry. Night put an end to the contest, but the Federals had lost ground, and twelve hundred of their dead and wounded were in the enemy's hands. The spot where I slept the previous night was now covered with mangled and slain.

I had laboured vainly all day to get some idea of movements, but in the hurry, the din, and the confusion, nothing was clear. The tired and disheartened regiments fell back at nightfall, their places supplied by fresh troops, and I found them resting in a clover-field, talking over the events of the day. The brigades of General Banks alone had been engaged, and they charged McDowell with their loss, he having failed to bring up his strong reserves. Banks himself had been ubiquitous, and at length, thrown from his horse, a whole battalion of cavalry had ridden over him. Calm, indomitable, courageous, the best of the political generals remounted and rode hither and thither, encouraging his men though bruised and bleeding himself. That they loved him I did not wonder.

The adjutants were calling the rolls, and feeble responses came from the thin, spare ranks.

"Jones!"

No answer.

"Who knows anything of Jones?"

"Jones was killed at the first charge, sir!" responded a bareheaded lad.

"Jukes!"

"Jim is in the ambulance, sir; werry badly knocked up. Got his thigh shot."

So the day's accounts ran, and awful replies provoked the usual laugh. Some of the men were already fast asleep; the field-officers lay moodily in the damp grass; some privates had imprudently lit fires to heat their coffee. I removed my nag's saddle and bridle, tied him to a rail, and spread my camp-bed upon the ground beside a favourite regiment. Scarcely ten minutes had elapsed before shells fell fast among us. A battery had been moved to the brow of a hill, not a half mile distant, and by the blaze of the guns we could see the enemy's horses and gunners. Our fires were capital targets, and the scream of many a poor fellow disembowelled told how fearfully accurate was the practice. Panic seized upon all. Horses broke their fastenings and plunged wildly through the fields. Artillerymen galloped down roads where the wounded were groping. Those who had been firm under fire were now panic-stricken. In the twinkling of an eye the clover-field was vacated, and I found myself almost alone.

My horse, trembling and terrified, leaped and struggled at the scream of every missile. I tried to untie his halter, but he threatened to trample me. I resolved to cut it, but my knife was missing. I soothed and stroked him in vain. Before, behind, above, the iron shrieked and howled. A deathly fear came over me. My heart seemed to have leaped to my throat and stuck there, choking me. A shell at that instant passing so close that I could have touched it, struck the ground just ahead and exploded, fire, iron, and earth. I seized my bed, took to my heels, and left steed and saddle to their fate.

Dashing through a corn-field, somersaulting a hedge, tumbling into a ditch, my being bound up in the single purpose of life, life, life, I heard close behind me something that sounded like the snort and rattle of a steam-engine. My poor horse, the rail trailing between his feet, had instinctively followed me. I seized him at once by the nostrils, wrenched the halter from his head, and leaped astride him. In a few minutes we reached the high road, and falling in with the stream of fugitives, were borne swiftly towards Culpepper. I recollect the ambulances groaning under fearful weights; the staggering pace of the slightly maimed; the lies of the skulkers who plead wounds and bruises; the columns of provost-guards who drove back the fugitives; the tramp of reinforcements coming swiftly up; the moonlit fields over which couriers and aides galloped

recklessly, and the creek where thousands of parched lips bent down to drink, dropping blood into the waters. And I remember the tavern porch in the shady street of Culpepper, where, with a silent and grateful prayer, I threw myself at midnight, and slept till day had far advanced.

The quiet village had been transformed into a Golgotha. Every house had death in it. I found, grouped around me, men with broken arms, splintered legs, severed fingers, shorn ears and noses, eyes shot out, bullets in backs, bullets in thighs, bullets in breasts. They lay closely packed, upon pavement and porch—fever in their eyes, fever in their hearts. I picked my way to the second-story, and entered my own room. Two men lay on my bed, eight on my floor.

The shops of tradesmen, the parlours and halls of spinsters and widows, the warehouses, the churches, were crowded with wounded. They underwent amputations in the shade of side-walks and in the porches of dwellings. Nakedness and blood, wounds and suffering, made the sunlight hideous. In a house not far off, lay General Geary, with a shattered arm. Close beside, lay General Augur, with a wound in the side. Colonel Donnelly was dying in the hall of the hotel, and a host of others bled in neighbouring dwellings. Every hour the ambulances came wearily into town with fresh burdens.

I heard, at eleven o'clock, that a cessation of hostilities had been agreed upon, to allow a burial of the dead. Procuring saddle and bridle, I took my way anew to the field, and passing the landmarks of the previous night, soon reached the *Aceldama*.

I was at first struck with the great number of knapsacks, haversacks, jackets, cartridge-boxes, belts, caps, knives, canteens, and muskets, thrown away in the stampede. Turning into a field, I reached the site of the battery that had so alarmed us. A splintered wheel, a blackened caisson, and eight dead horses, lay heaped together. A Federal battery had done thus much with a single shell. Resuming the road, I came at intervals upon a dead horse or a pool of blood; and at last emerging upon a corn-field, with Cedar Mountain frowning in front, I saw prone in one of the furrows the corpse of a Northern soldier: a dreadful sight! The day was insufferably hot. The dead became more numerous as I approached Cedar Creek, and in one place, where two fences met at an oblique angle, I counted eighteen bodies in the space of ten yards square. Their blue uniforms had faded to a dusky purple; the gold ornaments of officers were tarnished; the boots in almost every case removed from the feet. Numbers had fallen into the creek in the act of leaping across, and had crawled, dying, upon the bank. Behind a stone-heap I found one kneeling, his dull eye fixed at the breach of his musket: a ball through the forehead had transfigured him in the deed. Another lay with a bayonet driven through brow and eye, evidently the work of a musket ball. Those slain by shell or cannon ball were frightfully mangled; and some few that had died by bayonet thrusts preserved even in disfigurement the agony of the pang. Ambulances were busily engaged in removing the

wounded, some of whom were so weak, or so shattered in nerve, that they could not speak. Fatigue-parties were burying the bodies. Only a few favourite officers were allowed separate graves, the mass being thrown into trenches by dozens and scores, and covered with a single foot of clay. In the edges of the wood, where the Federals charged, the antagonists lay close together, and I came upon a secluded place where a whole company had stacked muskets, and afterwards run away. A few log-houses close to the field were bored and broken by balls; and in one I found an entire family that had fled to the cellar during the battle, and remained there eighteen hours in cold and terror. The tops of the corn were cut off for acres as by a great knife, and an old-fashioned Virginia plough that I came upon, close to a spring, had been splintered by a solid shot.

On a fallen gum-tree—the slain stretched around them—sat the officers of the parley: upon one side, the Confederate cavalry leader, Stuart, and General Earley; upon the other, Generals Hartsuff and Roberts. Stuart was lithe, grey-eyed, and tall; of an intense countenance, nervous, impulsive manner, and clad in grey, with a soft black hat. He was embellished with rosettes, cockades, gold-lace, and a large ostrich feather. He wore, curiously enough, United States buttons; and his sword, which he exhibited, was made in Philadelphia. Earley was a quiet, severe North Carolinian, who wore a homespun civil suit, with a brigadier's star in his shoulder bar. The Federal General Hartsuff was burly and good-humoured; Roberts, silent and sage, with white beard, and a distrustful eye. The former had been a classmate of the cavalry man; and he said, boyishly, "Stuart, old fellow, how d'e do?"

"God bless my soul, Hartsuff," replied the other: "it warms my heart to see you!" And they took a turn together, arm in arm.

A young Marylander, aide to General Stuart, led me within the Confederate lines, and produced a flask of apple whisky. He was pompously familiar, and so were most of his friends; but they regarded me as a cosmopolitan, and I hardly think would have treated me as a prisoner, if I had charged into their lines.

The interment went on all day. I made up a fearful list of names of killed and wounded, and, full of "incident," returned to New York to write of what I had seen.

I shall not further prolong this article. Suffice it to say, that I went back on the eve of the second battle of Bull Run, and witnessed new and more terrible slaughters. Typhus fever, the relic of certain experiences before Richmond, seized upon me again; and wearying of the horrible spectacles of the field, I renounced the army and the press.

# Roundabout Papers.—No. XXVI.

## DESSEIN'S.



ARRIVED by the night-mail packet from Dover. The passage had been rough, and the usual consequences had ensued. I was disinclined to travel farther that night on my road to Paris, and knew the Calais hotel of old as one of the cleanest, one of the dearest, one of the most comfortable hotels on the continent of Europe. There is no town more French than Calais. That charming old Hôtel Dessein, with its court, its gardens, its lordly kitchen, its princely waiter—a gentleman of the old school, who has welcomed the finest company in Europe—have long been known to me. I have read complaints in *The Times*, more than once I think, that the Dessein bills are dear. A bottle of soda-water certainly

costs—well, never mind how much. I remember as a boy, at the Ship at Dover (imperante Carolo Decimo), when, my place to London being paid, I had but 12s. left after a certain little Paris excursion (about which my benighted parents never knew anything), ordering for dinner a whiting, a beef-steak, and a glass of negus, and the bill was, dinner 7s., glass of negus 2s., waiter 6d., and only half-a-crown left, as I was a sinner, for the guard and coachman on the way to London! And I *was* a sinner. I had gone without leave. What a long, dreary, guilty, forty hours' journey it was from Paris to Calais, I remember! How did I come to think of this escapade, which occurred in the Easter vacation of the year 1830? I always think of it when I am crossing to Calais. Guilt, sir, guilt remains stamped on the memory, and I feel easier in my mind now that



it is liberated of this old peccadillo. I met my college tutor only yesterday. We were travelling, and stopped at the same hotel. He had the very next room to mine. After he had gone into his apartment, having shaken me quite kindly by the hand, I felt inclined to knock at his door, and say, "Doctor Bentley, I beg your pardon, but do you remember, when I was going down at the Easter vacation in 1830, you asked me where I was going to spend my vacation? And I said, with my friend Slingsby, in Huntingdonshire. Well, sir, I grieve to have to confess that I told you a fib. I had got 20*l.* and was going for a lark to Paris, where my friend Edwards was staying." There, it is out. The Doctor will read it, for I did not wake him up after all to make my confession, but protest he shall have a copy of this Roundabout sent to him when he returns to his lodge.

They gave me a bed-room there; a very neat room on the first floor, looking into the pretty garden. The hotel must look pretty much as it did a hundred years ago when he visited it. I wonder whether he paid his bill? Yes: his journey was just begun. He had borrowed or got the money somehow. Such a man would spend it liberally enough when he had it, give generously—nay, drop a tear over the fate of the poor fellow whom he relieved. I don't believe a word he says, but I never accused him of stinginess about money. That is a fault of much more virtuous people than he. Mr. Laurence is ready enough with his purse when there are anybody's guineas in it. Still, when I went to bed in the room, in *his* room; when I think how I admire, dislike, and have abused him, a certain dim feeling of apprehension filled my mind at the midnight hour. What if I should see his lean figure in the black satin breeches, his sinister smile, his long thin finger pointing to me in the moonlight (for I am in bed, and have popped my candle out), and he should say, "You mistrust me, you hate me, do you? And you, don't you know how Jack, Tom, and Harry, your brother authors, hate *you*?" I grin and laugh in the moonlight, in the midnight, in the silence. "O you ghost in black satin breeches and a wig! I like to be hated by some men," I say. "I know men whose lives are a scheme, whose laughter is a conspiracy, whose smile means something else, whose hatred is a cloak, and I had rather these men should hate me than not."

"My good sir," says he, with a ghastly grin on his lean face, "you have your wish."

"*Après?*" I say. "Please let me go to sleep. I shan't sleep any the worse because —"

"Because there are insects in the bed, and they sting you?" (This is only by way of illustration, my good sir; the animals don't bite me now. All the house at present seems to me excellently clean.) "Tis absurd to affect this indifference. If you are thin-skinned, and the reptiles bite, they keep you from sleep."

"There are some men who cry out at a flea-bite as loud as if they were torn by a vulture," I growl.

"Men of the *genus irritabile*, my worthy good gentleman!—and you are one."

"Yes, sir, I am of the profession, as you say; and I daresay make a great shouting and crying at a small hurt."

"You are ashamed of that quality by which you earn your subsistence, and such reputation as you have? Your sensibility is your livelihood, my worthy friend. You feel a pang of pleasure or pain? It is noted in your memory, and some day or other makes its appearance in your manuscript. Why, in your last Roundabout rubbish you mention reading your first novel on the day when King George IV. was crowned. I remember him in his cradle at St. James's, a lovely little babe; a gilt Chinese railing was before him, and I dropped the tear of sensibility as I gazed on the sleeping cherub."

"A tear—a fiddlestick, Mr. STERNE," I growled out, for of course I knew my friend in the wig and satin breeches to be no other than the notorious, nay, celebrated Mr. Laurence Sterne.

"Does not the sight of a beautiful infant charm and melt you, *mon ami*? If not, I pity you. Yes, he was beautiful. I was in London the year he was born. I used to breakfast at the Mount Coffee-house. I did not become the fashion until two years later, when my "Tristram" made his appearance, who has held his own for a hundred years. By the way, *mon bon monsieur*, how many authors of your present time will last till the next century? Do you think Brown will?"

I laughed with scorn as I lay in my bed (and so did the ghost give a ghastly snigger).

"Brown!" I roared. "One of the most over-rated men that ever put pen to paper!"

"What do you think of Jones?"

I grew indignant with this old cynic. "As a reasonable ghost, come out of the other world, you don't mean," I said, "to ask me a serious opinion of Mr. Jones? His books may be very good reading for maid-servants and school-boys, but you don't ask *me* to read them? As a scholar yourself you must know that ——"

"Well, then, Robinson?"

"Robinson, I am told, has merit. I daresay; I never have been able to read his books, and can't, therefore, form any opinion about Mr. Robinson. At least you will allow that I am not speaking in a prejudiced manner about *him*."

"Ah! I see you men of letters have your cabals and jealousies, as we had in my time. There was an Irish fellow by the name of Gouldsmith, who used to abuse me; but he went into no genteel company—and faith! it mattered little, his praise or abuse. I never was more surprised than when I heard that Mr. Irving, an American gentleman of parts and elegance, had wrote the fellow's life. To make a hero of that man, my dear sir, 'twas ridiculous! You followed in the fashion, I hear, and chose to lay a wreath before this queer little idol. Preposterous! A

pretty writer, who has turned some neat couplets. Bah! I have no patience with Master Posterity, that has chosen to take up this fellow, and make a hero of him! And there was another gentleman of my time, Mr. Thiefcatcher Fielding, forsooth! a fellow with the strength, and the tastes, and the manners of a porter! What madness has possessed you all to bow before that Calvert Butt of a man?—a creature without elegance or sensibility! The dog had spirits, certainly. I remember my Lord Bathurst praising them: but as for reading his books—*ma foi*, I would as lief go and dive for tripe in a cellar. The man's vulgarity stifles me. He wafts me whiffs of gin. Tobacco and onions are in his great coarse laugh, which choke me, *pardi*; and I don't think much better of the other fellow—the Scots' gallipot purveyor—Peregrine Clinker, Humphrey Random—how did the fellow call his rubbish? Neither of these men had the *bel air*, the *bon ton*, the *je ne sais quoy*. Pah! If I meet them in my walks by our Stygian river, I give them a wide berth, as that hybrid apothecary fellow would say. An ounce of civet, good apothecary; horrible, horrible! The mere thought of the coarseness of those men gives me the *chair de poule*. Mr. Fielding, especially, has no more sensibility than a butcher in Fleet Market. He takes his heroes out of ale-house kitchens, or worse places still. And this is the person whom Posterity has chosen to honour along with me—*me!* Faith, Monsieur Posterity, you have put me in pretty company, and I see you are no wiser than we were in our time. Mr. Fielding, forsooth! Mr. Tripe and Onions! Mr. Cowheel and Gin! Thank you for nothing, Monsieur Posterity!"

"And so," thought I, "even among these Stygians this envy and quarrelsomeness (if you will permit me the word) survive. What a pitiful meanness! To be sure, I can understand this feeling to a certain extent; a sense of justice will prompt it. In my own case, I often feel myself forced to protest against the absurd praises lavished on contemporaries. Yesterday, for instance, Lady Jones was good enough to praise one of my works. *Très bien*. But in the very next minute she began, with quite as great enthusiasm, to praise Miss Hobson's last romance. My good creature, what is that woman's praise worth who absolutely admires the writings of Miss Hobson? I offer a friend a bottle of '44 claret, fit for a pontifical supper. "This is capital wine," says he; "and now we have finished the bottle, will you give me a bottle of that ordinaire we drank the other day?" Very well, my good man. You are a good judge—of ordinaire, I daresay. Nothing so provokes my anger, and rouses my sense of justice, as to hear other men undeservedly praised. In a word, if you wish to remain friends with me, don't praise anybody. You tell me that the Venus de' Medici is beautiful, or Jacob Omnium is tall. *Que diable!* Can't I judge for myself? Haven't I eyes and a foot-rule? I don't think the Venus is so handsome, since you press me. She is pretty, but she has no expression. And as for Mr. Omnium, I can see much taller men in a fair for twopence."

"And so," I said, turning round to Mr. Sterne, "you are actually jealous of Mr. Fielding? O you men of letters, you men of letters! Is not the world (your world, I mean) big enough for all of you?"

I often travel in my sleep. I often of a night find myself walking in my night-gown about the grey streets. It is awkward at first, but somehow nobody makes any remark. I glide along over the ground with my naked feet. The mud does not wet them. The passers-by do not tread on them. I am wafted over the ground, down the stairs, through the doors. This sort of travelling, dear friends, I am sure you have all of you indulged.

Well, on the night in question (and, if you wish to know the precise date, it was the 31st of September last), after having some little conversation with Mr. Sterne in our bed-room, I must have got up, though I protest I don't know how, and come downstairs with him into the coffee-room of the Hôtel Dessein, where the moon was shining, and a cold supper was laid out. I forget what we had—"vol au vent d'œufs de Phénix—agneau aux pistaches à la Barmécide,"—what matters what we had? As regards supper this is certain, the less you have of it the better.

That is what one of the guests remarked,—a shabby old man, in a wig, and such a dirty, ragged, disreputable dressing-gown that I should have been quite surprised at him, only one never is surprised in dress—under certain circumstances.

"I can't eat 'em now," said the greasy man (with his false old teeth, I wonder he could eat anything). "I remember Alvanley eating three suppers once at Carlton House—one night *de petite comité*."

"*Petit comité*, sir," said Mr. Sterne.

"Dammy, sir, let me tell my own story my own way. I say, one night at Carlton House, playing at blind hockey with York, Wales, Tom Raikes, Prince Boothby, and Dutch Sam the boxer, Alvanley ate three suppers, and won three and twenty hundred pounds in ponies. Never saw a fellow with such an appetite except Wales in his *good* time. But he destroyed the finest digestion a man ever had with maraschino, by Jove—always at it."

"Try mine," said Mr. Sterne.

"What a doosid queer box," says Mr. Brummell.

"I had it from a Capuchin friar in this town. The box is but a horn one; but to the nose of sensibility Araby's perfume is not more delicate."

"I call it doosid stale old rappee," says Mr. Brummell—(as for me I declare I could not smell anything at all in either of the boxes). "Old boy in smockfrock, take a pinch?"

The old boy in the smockfrock, as Mr. Brummell called him, was a very old man, with long white beard, wearing, not a smockfrock, but a shirt; and he had actually nothing else save a rope round his neck, which hung behind his chair in the queerest way.

"Fair sir," he said, turning to Mr. Brummell, "when the Prince of Wales and his father laid siege to our town——"

"What nonsense are you talking, old cock?" says Mr. Brummell; "Wales was never here. His late Majesty George IV. passed through on his way to Hanover. My good man, you don't seem to know what's up at all. What is he talkin' about the siege of Calais? I lived here fifteen years! Ought to know. What's his old name?"

"I am Master Eustace, of Saint Peter," said the old gentleman in the shirt. "When my Lord King Edward laid siege to this city——"

"Laid siege to Jericho!" cries Mr. Brummell. "The old man is cracked—cracked, sir!"

"——Laid siege to this city," continued the old man, "I and five more promised Messire Gautier de Mauny that we would give ourselves up as ransom for the place. And we came before our Lord King Edward, attired as you see, and the fair queen begged our lives out of her gnamercy."

"Queen, nonsense! you mean the Princess of Wales—pretty woman, *petit nez retroussé*, grew monstrous stout?" suggested Mr. Brummell, whose reading was evidently not extensive. "Sir Sidney Smith was a fine fellow, great talker, hook nose, so has Lord Cochrane, so has Lord Wellington. She was very sweet on Sir Sidney."

"Your acquaintance with the history of Calais does not seem to be considerable," said Mr. Sterne to Mr. Brummell, with a shrug.

"Don't it, bishop?—for I conclude you are a bishop by your wig. I know Calais as well as any man. I lived here for years before I took that confounded consulate at Caen. Lived in this hotel, then at Leleux's. People used to stop here. Good fellows used to ask for poor George Brummell; Hertford did, so did the Duchess of Devonshire. Not know Calais indeed! That is a good joke. Had many a good dinner here: sorry I ever left it."

"My Lord King Edward," chirped the queer old gentleman in the shirt, "colonized the place with his English, after we had yielded it up to him. I have heard tell they kept it for nigh three hundred years, till my Lord de Guise took it from a fair Queen, Mary of blessed memory, a holy woman. Eh, but Sire Gautier of Mauny was a good knight, a valiant captain, gentle and courteous withal! Do you remember his ransoming the ——"

"What is the old fellow twaddlin' about?" cries Brummell. He is talking about some knight?—I never spoke to a knight, and very seldom to a baronet. Firkins, my buttermilk, was a knight—a knight and alderman. Wales knighted him once on going into the city."

"I am not surprised that the gentleman should not understand Messire Eustace of St. Peter's," said the ghostly individual addressed as Mr. Sterne. "Your reading doubtless has not been very extensive?"

"Dammy, sir, speak for yourself!" cries Mr. Brummell, testily. "I never professed to be a reading man, but I was as good as my neighbours. Wales wasn't a reading man; York wasn't a reading man; Clarence wasn't a reading man; Sussex was, but he wasn't a man in society. I

remember reading your *Sentimental Journey*, old boy : read it to the duchess at Beauvoir, I recollect, and she cried over it. Doosid clever amusing book, and does you great credit. Birron wrote doosid clever books, too ; so did Monk Lewis. George Spencer was an elegant poet, and my dear Duchess of Devonshire, if she had not been a grande dame, would have beat 'em all, by George. Wales couldn't write : he could sing, but he couldn't spell."

"Ah, you know the great world ? so did I in my time, Mr. Brummell. I have had the visiting tickets of half the nobility at my lodgings in Bond Street. But they left me there no more cared for than last year's calendar," sighed Mr. Sterne. "I wonder who is the mode in London now ? One of our late arrivals, my Lord Macaulay, has prodigious merit and learning, and, faith, his histories are more amusing than any novels, my own included."

"Don't know, I'm sure ; not in my line. Pick this bone of chicken," says Mr. Brummell, trifling with a skeleton bird before him.

"I remember in this city of Calais worse fare than you bird," said old Mr. Eustace, of Saint Peter. "Murry, sirs, when my Lord King Edward laid siege to us, lucky was he who could get a slice of horse for his breakfast, and a rat was sold at the price of a hare."

"Hare is coarse food, never tasted rat," remarked the Beau. *Table-d'hôte* poor fare enough for a man like me, who has been accustomed to the best of cookery. But rat—stifle me ! I couldn't swallow that : never could bear hardship at all."

"We had to bear enough when my Lord of England pressed us. 'Twas pitiful to see the faces of our women as the siege went on, and hear the little ones asking for dinner."

"Always a bore, children. At dessert, they are bad enough, but at dinner they're the deuce and all," remarked Mr. Brummell.

Messire Eustace, of St. Peter, did not seem to pay much attention to the Beau's remarks, but continued his own train of thought as old men will do.

"I hear," said he, "that there has actually been no war between us of France and you men of England for well nigh fifty year. Ours has ever been a nation of warriors. And besides her regular found men-at-arms, 'tis said the English of the present time have more than a hundred thousand of archers with weapons that will carry for half a mile. And a multitude have come amongst us of late from a great Western country, never so much as heard of in my time—valiant men and great drawers of the long-bow, and they say they have ships in armour that no shot can penetrate. Is it so ? Wonderful ; wonderful ! The best armour, gossips, is a stout heart."

"And if ever manly heart beat under shirt-frill, thine is that heart, Sir Eustace !" cried Mr. Sterne, enthusiastically.

"We, of France, were never accused of lack of courage, sir, in so far as I know," said Messire Eustace. "We have shown as much in a

thousand wars with you English by sea and land; and sometimes we conquered, and sometimes, as is the fortune of war, we were discomfited. And notably in a great sea-fight which befel off Ushant on the first of June—— Our amiral, Messire Villaret de Joyeuse, on board his galleon named the *Vengeur*, being sore pressed by an English bombard, rather than yield the crew of his ship to mercy, determined to go down with all on board of her: and, to the cry of *Vive la Répub*——or, I would say, of *Notre Dame à la Rescousse*, he and his crew all sank to an immortal grave——”

“Sir,” said I, looking with amazement at the old gentleman, “surely, surely, there is some mistake in your statement. Permit me to observe that the action of the first of June took place five hundred years after your time, and——”

“Perhaps I am confusing my dates,” said the old gentleman, with a faint blush. “You say I am mixing up the transactions of my time on earth with the story of my successors? It may be so. We take no count of a few centuries more or less in our dwelling by the darkling Stygian river. Of late, there came amongst us a good knight, Messire de Cambronne, who fought against you English in the country of Flanders, being captain of the guard of my Lord the King of France, in a famous battle where you English would have been utterly routed but for the succour of the Prussian heathen. This Messire de Cambronne, when bidden to yield by you of England, answered this, ‘The guard dies but never surrenders;’ and fought a long time afterwards, as became a good knight. In our wars with you of England it may have pleased the Fates to give you the greater success, but on our side, also, there has been no lack of brave deeds performed by brave men.”

“King Edward may have been the victor, sir, as being the strongest, but you are the hero of the siege of Calais!” cried Mr. Sterne. “Your story is sacred, and your name has been blessed for five hundred years. Wherever men speak of patriotism and sacrifice, Eustace, of Saint Pierre, shall be beloved and remembered. I prostrate myself before the bare feet which stood before King Edward. What collar of chivalry is to be compared to that glorious order which you wear? Think, sir, how out of the myriad millions of our race, you, and some few more, stand forth as exemplars of duty and honour. *Fortunati nimium!*”

“Sir,” said the old gentleman, “I did but my duty at a painful moment; and ’tis matter of wonder to me that men talk still, and glorify such a trifling matter. By our Lady’s grace, in the fair kingdom of France, there are scores of thousands of men, gentle and simple, who would do as I did. Does not every sentinel at his post, does not every archer in the front of battle, brave it, and die where his captain bids him? Who am I that I should be chosen out of all France to be an example of fortitude? I braved no tortures, though these I trust I would have endured with a good heart. I was subject to threats only. Who was the Roman knight of whom the Latin clerk Horatius tells?”



"A Latin clerk? Faith, I forget my Latin," says Mr. Brummell. "Ask the parson here."

"Messire Regulus, I remember, was his name. Taken prisoner by the Saracens, he gave his knightly word, and was permitted to go seek a ransom among his own people. Being unable to raise the sum that was a fitting ransom for such a knight, he returned to Afric, and cheerfully submitted to the tortures which the Paynims inflicted. And 'tis said he took leave of his friends as gaily as though he were going to a village kermes, or riding to his garden house in the suburb of the city."

"Great, good, glorious man!" cried Mr. Sterne, very much moved. "Let me embrace that gallant hand, and bedew it with my tears! As long as honour lasts thy name shall be remembered. See this dew-drop twinkling on my cheek! 'Tis the sparkling tribute that Sensibility pays to Valour. Though in my life and practice I may turn from Virtue, believe me, I never have ceased to honour her! Ah, Virtue! Ah, Sensibility! Oh——"

Here Mr. Sterne was interrupted by a monk of the Order of St. Francis who stepped into the room, and begged us all to take a pinch of his famous old rappee. I suppose the snuff was very pungent, for, with a great start, I woke up; and now perceived that I must have been dreaming altogether. Dessein's of nowadays is not the Dessein's which Mr. Sterne, and Mr. Brummell, and I recollect in the good old times. The town of Calais has bought the old hotel, and Dessein has gone over to Quillacq's. And I was there yesterday. And I remember old diligences, and old postilions in pig-tails and jack-boots, who were once as alive as I am, and whose cracking whips I have heard in the midnight many and many a time. Now, where are they? Behold, they have been ferried over Styx, and have passed away into limbo.

I wonder what time does my boat go? Ah! Here comes the waiter bringing me my little bill.

## The Small House at Allington.

### CHAPTER X.

MRS. LUPEX AND AMELIA ROPER.



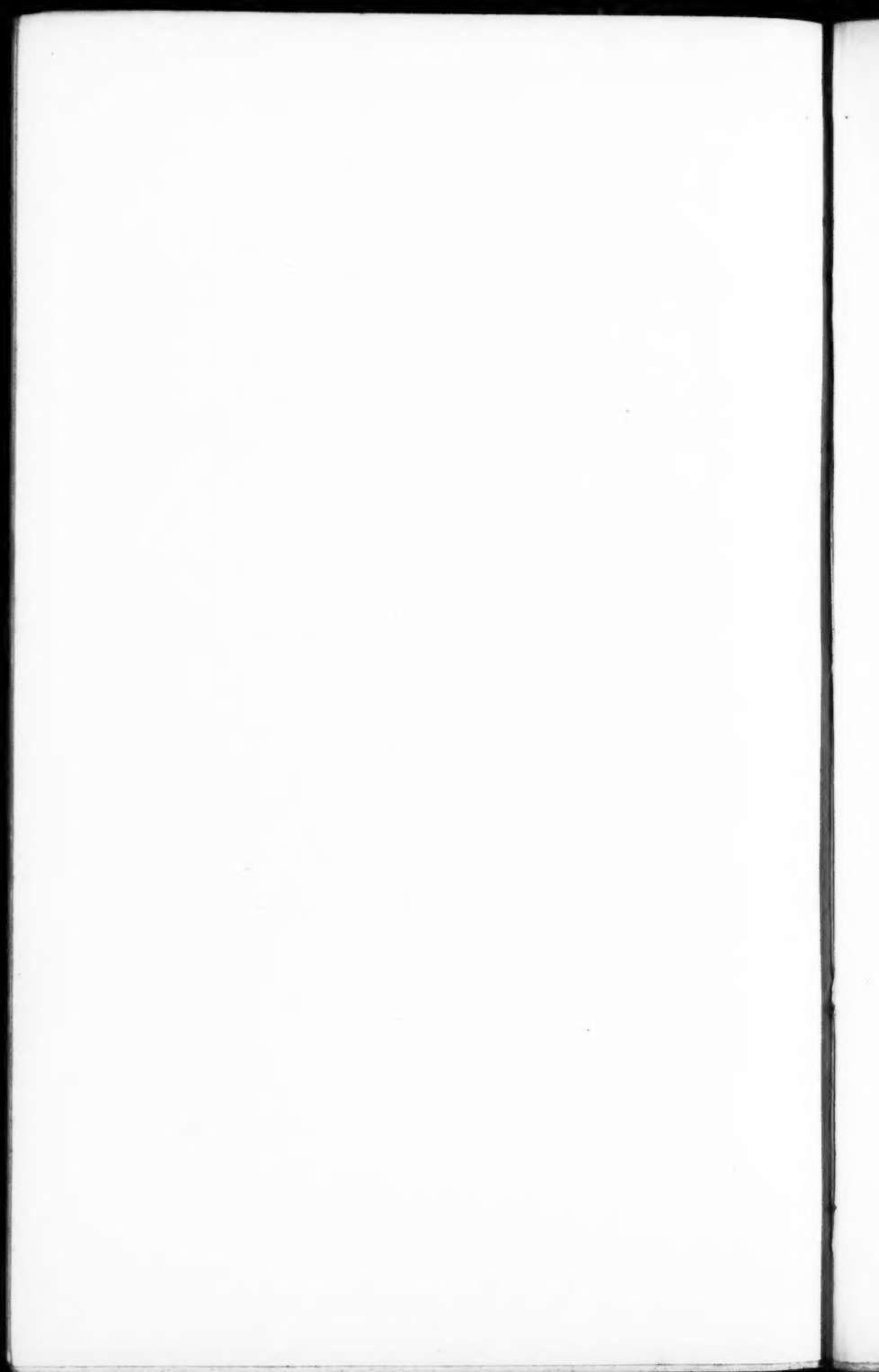
SHOULD simply mislead a confiding reader if I were to tell him that Mrs. Lupex was an amiable woman. Perhaps the fact that she was not amiable is the one great fault that should be laid to her charge; but that fault had spread itself so widely, and had cropped forth in so many different places of her life, like a strong rank plant that will show itself all over a garden, that it may almost be said that it made her odious in every branch of life, and detestable alike to those who knew her little and to those who knew her much. If a searcher could have got

at the inside spirit of the woman, that searcher would have found that she wished to go right,—that she did make, or at any rate promise to herself that she would make, certain struggles to attain decency and propriety. But it was so natural to her to torment those whose misfortune brought them near to her, and especially that wretched man who in an evil day had taken her to his bosom as his wife, that decency fled from her and propriety would not live in her quarters.

Mrs. Lupex was, as I have already described her, a woman not without some feminine attraction in the eyes of those who like morning negligence and evening finery, and do not object to a long nose somewhat on one side. She was clever in her way, and could say smart things. She could flatter also, though her very flattery had always in it something that



"Mr. Cradell, your hand," said Lupex.



was disagreeable. And she must have had some power of will, as otherwise her husband would have escaped from her before the days of which I am writing. Otherwise, also, she could hardly have obtained her footing and kept it in Mrs. Roper's drawing-room. For though the hundred pounds a year, either paid or promised to be paid, was matter with Mrs. Roper of vast consideration, nevertheless the first three months of Mrs. Lupex's sojourn in Burton Crescent were not over before the landlady of that house was most anxiously desirous of getting herself quit of her married boarders.

I shall perhaps best describe a little incident that had occurred in Burton Crescent during the absence of our friend Eames, and the manner in which things were going on in that locality, by giving at length two letters which Johnny received by post at Guestwick on the morning after Mrs. Dale's party. One was from his friend Cradell, and the other from the devoted Amelia. In this instance I will give that from the gentleman first, presuming that I shall best consult my readers' wishes by keeping the greater delicacy till the last.

*"Income-Tax Office, September, 186-.*

"MY DEAR JOHNNY,—We have had a terrible affair in the Crescent; and I really hardly know how to tell you; and yet I must do it, for I want your advice. You know the sort of standing that I was on with Mrs. Lupex, and perhaps you remember what we were saying on the platform at the station. I have, no doubt, been fond of her society, as I might be of that of any other friend. I knew, of course, that she was a fine woman; and if her husband chose to be jealous, I couldn't help that. But I never intended anything wrong; and, if it was necessary, couldn't I call you as a witness to prove it? I never spoke a word to her out of Mrs. Roper's drawing-room; and Miss Spruce, or Mrs. Roper, or somebody has always been there. You know he drinks horribly sometimes, but I do not think he ever gets downright drunk. Well, he came home last night about nine o'clock after one of these bouts. From what Jemima says" [Jemima was Mrs. Roper's parlour-maid], "I believe he had been at it down at the theatre for three days. We hadn't seen him since Tuesday. He went straight into the parlour and sent up Jemima to me, to say that he wanted to see me. Mrs. Lupex was in the room and heard the girl summon me, and, jumping up, she declared that if there was going to be blood shed she would leave the house. There was nobody else in the room but Miss Spruce, and she didn't say a word, but took her candle and went upstairs. You must own it looked very uncomfortable. What was I to do with a drunken man down in the parlour? However, she seemed to think I ought to go. 'If he comes up here,' said she, 'I shall be the victim. You little know of what that man is capable when his wrath has been inflamed by wine?' Now, I think you are aware that I am not likely to be very much afraid of any man; but why was I to be got into a row in such a way as this? I hadn't done anything. And then, if there was to be a quarrel, and anything was to come of it, as she seemed to expect,—like bloodshed, I mean, or a fight, or if he were to knock me on the head with the poker, where should I be at my office? A man in a public office, as you and I are, can't quarrel like anybody else. It was this that I felt so much at the moment. 'Go down to him,' said she, 'unless you wish to see me murdered at your feet.' Fisher says, that if what I say is true, they must have arranged it all between them. I don't think that; for I do believe that she really is fond of me. And then everybody knows that they never do agree about anything. But she certainly did implore me to go down to him. Well, I went down; and, as I got to the bottom of the stairs, where I found Jemima, I heard him walking up and down the

parlour. 'Take care of yourself, Mr. Cradell,' said the girl; and I could see by her face that she was in a terrible fright.

"At that moment I happened to see my hat on the hall table, and it occurred to me that I ought to put myself into the hands of a friend. Of course, I was not afraid of that man in the dining-room; but should I have been justified in engaging in a struggle, perhaps for dear life, in Mrs. Roper's house? I was bound to think of her interests. So I took up my hat, and deliberately walked out of the front door. 'Tell him,' said I to Jemima, 'that I'm not at home.' And so I went away direct to Fisher's, meaning to send him back to Lupex as my friend; but Fisher was at his chess-club.

"As I thought there was no time to be lost on such an occasion as this, I went down to the club and called him out. You know what a cool fellow Fisher is. I don't suppose anything would ever excite him. When I told him the story, he said that he would sleep upon it; and I had to walk up and down before the club while he finished his game. Fisher seemed to think that I might go back to Burton Crescent; but, of course, I knew that that would be out of the question. So it ended in my going home and sleeping on his sofa, and sending for some of my things in the morning. I wanted him to get up and see Lupex before going to the office this morning. But he seemed to think it would be better to put it off, and so he will call upon him at the theatre immediately after office hours.

"I want you to write to me at once, saying what you know about the matter. I ask you, as I don't want to lug in any of the other people at Roper's. It is very uncomfortable, as I can't exactly leave her at once because of last quarter's money, otherwise I should cut and run; for the house is not the sort of place either for you or me. You may take my word for that, Master Johnny. And I could tell you something, too, about A. R., only I don't want to make mischief. But do you write immediately. And now I think of it, you had better write to Fisher, so that he can show your letter to Lupex,—just saying, that to the best of your belief there had never been anything between her and me but mere friendship; and that, of course, you, as my friend, must have known everything. Whether I shall go back to Roper's to-night will depend on what Fisher says after the interview.

"Good-by, old fellow! I hope you are enjoying yourself, and that L. D. is quite well.—Your sincere friend,  
JOSEPH CRADELL."

John Eames read this letter over twice before he opened that from Amelia. He had never yet received a letter from Miss Roper; and felt very little of that ardour for its perusal which young men generally experience on the receipt of a first letter from a young lady. The memory of Amelia was at the present moment distasteful to him; and he would have thrown the letter unopened into the fire, had he not felt it might be dangerous to do so. As regarded his friend Cradell, he could not but feel ashamed of him,—ashamed of him, not for running away from Mr. Lupex, but for excusing his escape on false pretences.

And then, at last, he opened the letter from Amelia. "Dearest John," it began; and as he read the words, he crumpled the paper up between his fingers. It was written in a fair female hand, with sharp points instead of curves to the letters, but still very legible, and looking as though there were a decided purport in every word of it.

"DEAREST JOHN,—It feels so strange to me to write to you in such language as this. And yet you are dearest, and have I not a right to call you so? And are you not my own, and am not I yours?" [Again he crunched the paper up in his hand, and, as he did so, he muttered words which I need not repeat at length. But still he went on with his letter.] "I know that we understand each other perfectly, and when that is the case,

heart should be allowed to speak openly to heart. Those are my feelings, and I believe that you will find them reciprocal in your own bosom. Is it not sweet to be loved? I find it so. And, dearest John, let me assure you, with open candour, that there is no room for jealousy in this breast with regard to you. I have too much confidence for that, I can assure you, both in your honor and in my own—I would say charms, only you would call me vain. You must not suppose that I meant what I said about L. D. Of course, you will be glad to see the friends of your childhood; and it would be far from your Amelia's heart to begrudge you such delightful pleasure. Your friends will, I hope, some day be my friends." [Another crunch.] "And if there be any one among them, any real L. D. whom you have specially liked, I will receive her to my heart, specially, also." [This assurance on the part of his Amelia was too much for him, and he threw the letter from him, thinking whence he might get relief—whether from suicide or from the colonies; but presently he took it up again, and drained the bitter cup to the bottom.] "And if I seemed petulant to you before you went away, you must forgive your own Amelia. I had nothing before me but misery for the month of your absence. There is no one here congenial to my feelings,—of course not. And you would not wish me to be happy in your absence,—would you? I can assure you, let your wishes be what they may, I never can be happy again unless you are with me. Write to me one little line, and tell me that you are grateful to me for my devotion.

"And now, I must tell you that we have had a sad affair in the house; and I do not think that your friend Mr. Cradell has behaved at all well. You remember how he has been always going on with Mrs. Lupex. Mother was quite unhappy about it, though she didn't like to say anything. Of course, when a lady's name is concerned, it is particular. But Lupex has become dreadful jealous during the last week; and we all knew that something was coming. She is an artful woman, but I don't think she meant anything bad,—only to drive her husband to desperation. He came here yesterday in one of his tantrums, and wanted to see Cradell; but he got frightened, and took his hat and went off. Now, that wasn't quite right. If he was innocent, why didn't he stand his ground and explain the mistake. As mother says, it gives the house such a name. Lupex swore last night that he'd be off to the Income-tax Office this morning, and have Cradell out before all the commissioners, and clerks, and everybody. If he does that, it will get into the papers, and all London will be full of it. She would like it, I know; for all she cares for is to be talked about; but only think what it will be for mother's house. I wish you were here; for your high prudence and courage would set everything right at once,—at least, I think so.

"I shall count the minutes till I get an answer to this, and shall envy the postman who will have your letter before it will reach me. Do write at once. If I do not hear by Monday morning I shall think that something is the matter. Even though you are among your dear old friends, surely you can find a moment to write to your own Amelia.

"Mother is very unhappy about this affair of the Lupexes. She says that if you were here to advise her she should not mind it so much. It is very hard upon her, for she does strive to make the house respectable and comfortable for everybody. I would send my duty and love to your dear mamma, if I only knew her, as I hope I shall do one day, and to your sister, and to L. D. also, if you like to tell her how we are situated together. So, now, no more from your

"Always affectionate sweetheart,

"AMELIA ROPER."

Poor Eames did not feel the least gratified by any part of this fond letter; but the last paragraph of it was the worst. Was it to be endured by him that this woman should send her love to his mother and to his sister, and even to Lily Dale! He felt that there was a pollution in the very mention of Lily's name by such an one as Amelia Roper. And yet



Amelia Roper was, as she had assured him,—his own. Much as he disliked her at the present moment, he did believe that he was,—her own. He did feel that she had obtained a certain property in him, and that his destiny in life would tie him to her. He had said very few words of love to her at any time,—very few, at least, that were themselves of any moment; but among those few there had undoubtedly been one or two in which he had told her that he loved her. And he had written to her that fatal note! Upon the whole, would it not be as well for him to go out to the great reservoir behind Guestwick, by which the Hamersham Canal was fed with its waters, and put an end to his miserable existence?

On that same day he did write a letter to Fisher, and he wrote also to Cradell. As to those letters he felt no difficulty. To Fisher he declared his belief that Cradell was innocent as he was himself as regarded Mrs. Lupex. "I don't think he is the sort of man to make up to a married woman," he said, somewhat to Cradell's displeasure, when the letter reached the Income-tax Office; for that gentleman was not averse to the reputation for success in love which the little adventure was, as he thought, calculated to give him among his brother clerks. At the first bursting of the shell, when that desperately jealous man was raging in the parlour, incensed by the fumes both of wine and love, Cradell had felt that the affair was disagreeably painful. But on the morning of the third day,—for he had passed two nights on his friend Fisher's sofa,—he had begun to be somewhat proud of it, and did not dislike to hear Mrs. Lupex's name in the mouths of the other clerks. When, therefore, Fisher read to him the letter from Guestwick, he hardly was pleased with his friend's tone. "Ha, ha, ha," said he, laughing. "That's just what I wanted him to say. Make up to a married woman, indeed. No; I'm the last man in London to do that sort of thing."

"Upon my word, Caudle, I think you are," said Fisher; "the very last man."

And then poor Cradell was not happy. On that afternoon he boldly went to Burton Crescent, and eat his dinner there. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Lupex were to be seen, nor were their names mentioned to him by Mrs. Roper. In the course of the evening he did pluck up courage to ask Miss Spruce where they were; but that ancient lady merely shook her head solemnly, and declared that she knew nothing about such goings on;—no, not she.

But what was John Eames to do as to that letter from Amelia Roper? He felt that any answer to it would be very dangerous, and yet that he could not safely leave it unanswered. He walked off by himself across Guestwick Common, and through the woods of Guestwick Manor, up by the big avenue of elms in Lord De Guest's park, trying to resolve how he might rescue himself from this scrape. Here, over the same ground, he had wandered scores of times in his earlier years, when he knew nothing beyond the innocence of his country home, thinking of Lily Dale and swearing to himself that she should be his wife. Here he had strung

together his rhymes, and fed his ambition with high hopes, building gorgeous castles in the air, in all of which Lilian reigned as a queen; and though in those days he had known himself to be awkward, poor, uncared for by any in the world except his mother and his sister, yet he had been happy in his hopes,—happy in his hopes even though he had never taught himself really to believe that they would be realized. But now there was nothing in his hopes or thoughts to make him happy. Everything was black, and wretched, and ruinous. What would it matter, after all, even if he should marry Amelia Roper, seeing that Lily was to be given to another? But then the idea of Amelia as he had seen her that night through the chink in the door came upon his memory, and he confessed to himself that life with such a wife as that would be a living death.

At one moment he thought that he would tell his mother everything, and leave her to write an answer to Amelia's letter. Should the worst come to the worst, the Ropers could not absolutely destroy him. That they could bring an action against him, and have him locked up for a term of years, and dismissed from his office, and exposed in all the newspapers, he seemed to know. That might all, however, be endured, if only the gauntlet could be thrown down for him by some one else. The one thing which he felt that he could not do was, to write to a girl whom he had professed to love, and tell her that he did not love her. He knew that he could not himself form such words upon the paper; nor, as he was well aware, could he himself find the courage to tell her to her face that he had changed his mind. He knew that he must become the victim of his Amelia, unless he could find some friendly knight to do battle in his favour: and then again he thought of his mother.

But when he returned home he was as far as ever from any resolve to tell her how he was situated. I may say that his walk had done him no good, and that he had not made up his mind to anything. He had been building those pernicious castles in the air during more than half the time; not castles in the building of which he could make himself happy, as he had done in the old days, but black castles, with cruel dungeons, into which hardly a ray of life could find its way. In all these edifices his imagination pictured to him Lily as the wife of Mr. Crosbie. He accepted that as a fact, and then went to work in his misery, making her as wretched as himself, through the misconduct and harshness of her husband. He tried to think, and to resolve what he would do; but there is no task so hard as that of thinking, when the mind has an objection to the matter brought before it. The mind, under such circumstances, is like a horse that is brought to the water but refuses to drink. So Johnny returned to his home, still doubting whether or no he would answer Amelia's letter. And if he did not answer it, how would he conduct himself on his return to Burton Crescent?

I need hardly say that Miss Roper, in writing her letter, had been aware of all this, and that Johnny's position had been carefully prepared for him by——his affectionate sweetheart.

## CHAPTER XI.

## SOCIAL LIFE.

Mr. and Mrs. LUPEX had eaten a sweetbread together in much connubial bliss on that day which had seen Cradell returning to Mrs. Roper's hospitable board. They had together eaten a sweetbread, with some other delicacies of the season, in the neighbourhood of the theatre, and had washed down all unkindness with bitter beer and brandy-and-water. But of this reconciliation Cradell had not heard; and when he saw them come together into the drawing-room, a few minutes after the question he had addressed to Miss Spruce, he was certainly surprised.

Lupex was not an ill-natured man, nor one naturally savage by disposition. He was a man fond of sweetbread and little dinners, and one to whom hot brandy-and-water was too dear. Had the wife of his bosom been a good helpmate to him, he might have gone through the world, if not respectably, at any rate without open disgrace. But she was a woman who left a man no solace except that to be found in brandy-and-water. For eight years they had been man and wife; and sometimes—I grieve to say it—he had been driven almost to hope that she would commit a married woman's last sin, and leave him. In his misery, any mode of escape would have been welcome to him. Had his energy been sufficient he would have taken his scene-painting capabilities off to Australia,—or to the farthest shifting of scenes known on the world's stage. But he was an easy, listless, self-indulgent man; and at any moment, let his misery be as keen as might be, a little dinner, a few soft words, and a glass of brandy-and-water would bring him round. The second glass would make him the fondest husband living; but the third would restore to him the memory of all his wrongs, and give him courage against his wife or all the world,—even to the detriment of the furniture around him, should a stray poker chance to meet his hand. All these peculiarities of his character were not, however, known to Cradell; and when our friend saw him enter the drawing-room with his wife on his arm, he was astonished.

"Mr. Cradell, your hand," said Lupex, who had advanced as far as the second glass of brandy-and-water, but had not been allowed to go beyond it. "There has been a misunderstanding between us; let it be forgotten."

"Mr. Cradell, if I know him," said the lady, "is too much the gentleman to bear any anger when a gentleman has offered him his hand."

"Oh, I'm sure," said Cradell, "I'm quite—indeed, I'm delighted to find there's nothing wrong after all." And then he shook hands with both of them; whereupon Miss Spruce got up, curtsied low, and also shook hands with the husband and wife.

"You're not a married man, Mr. Cradell," said Lupex, "and, therefore, you cannot understand the workings of a husband's heart. There

have been moments when my regard for that woman has been too much for me."

"Now, Lupex, don't," said she, playfully tapping him with an old parasol which she still held.

"And I do not hesitate to say that my regard for her was too much for me on that night when I sent for you to the dining-room."

"I'm glad it's all put right now," said Cradell.

"Very glad, indeed," said Miss Spruce.

"And, therefore, we need not say any more about it," said Mrs. Lupex.

"One word," said Lupex, waving his hand. "Mr. Cradell, I greatly rejoice that you did not obey my summons on that night. Had you done so,—I confess it now,—had you done so, blood would have been the consequence. I was mistaken. I acknowledge my mistake;—but blood would have been the consequence."

"Dear, dear, dear," said Miss Spruce.

"Miss Spruce," continued Lupex, "there are moments when the heart becomes too strong for a man."

"I dare say," said Miss Spruce.

"Now, Lupex, that will do," said his wife.

"Yes; that will do. But I think it right to tell Mr. Cradell that I am glad he did not come to me. Your friend, Mr. Cradell, did me the honour of calling on me at the theatre yesterday, at half-past four; but I was in the slings then, and could not very well come down to him. I shall be happy to see you both any day at five, and to bury all unkindness with a chop and glass at the Pot and Poker, in Bow-street."

"I'm sure you're very kind," said Cradell.

"And Mrs. Lupex will join us. There's a delightful little snuggery upstairs at the Pot and Poker; and if Miss Spruce will condescend to——"

"Oh, I'm an old woman, sir."

"No—no—no," said Lupex, "I deny that. Come, Cradell, what do you say?—just a snug little dinner for four, you know."

It was, no doubt, pleasant to see Mr. Lupex in his present mood,—much pleasanter than in that other mood of which blood would have been the consequence; but pleasant as he now was, it was, nevertheless, apparent that he was not quite sober. Cradell, therefore, did not settle the day for the little dinner; but merely remarked that he should be very happy at some future day.

"And now, Lupex, suppose you get off to bed," said his wife. "You've had a very trying day, you know."

"And you, ducky?"

"I shall come presently. Now don't be making a fool of yourself, but get yourself off. Come—" and she stood close up against the open door, waiting for him to pass.

"I rather think I shall remain where I am, and have a glass of something hot," said he.

"Lupex, do you want to aggravate me again?" said the lady, and she

looked at him with a glance of her eye which he thoroughly understood. He was not in a humour for fighting, nor was he at present desirous of blood; so he resolved to go. But as he went he prepared himself for new battles. "I shall do something desperate, I am sure; I know I shall," he said, as he pulled off his boots.

"Oh, Mr. Cradell," said Mrs. Lupex as soon as she had closed the door behind her retreating husband, "how am I ever to look you in the face again after the events of these last memorable days?" And then she seated herself on the sofa, and hid her face in a cambric handkerchief.

"As for that," said Cradell, "what does it signify,—among friends like us, you know?"

"But that it should be known at your office,—as of course it is, because of the gentleman that went down to him at the theatre!—I don't think I shall ever survive it."

"You see I was obliged to send somebody, Mrs. Lupex."

"I'm not finding fault, Mr. Cradell. I know very well that in my melancholy position I have no right to find fault, and I don't pretend to understand gentlemen's feelings towards each other. But to have had my name mentioned up with yours in that way is— Oh! Mr. Cradell, I don't know how I'm ever to look you in the face again." And again she buried hers in her pocket-handkerchief.

"Handsome is as handsome does," said Miss Spruce; and there was that in her tone of voice which seemed to convey much hidden meaning.

"Exactly so, Miss Spruce," said Mrs. Lupex; "and that's my only comfort at the present moment. Mr. Cradell is a gentleman who would scorn to take advantage—I'm quite sure of that." And then she did contrive to look at him over the edge of the hand which held the handkerchief.

"That I wouldn't, I'm sure," said Cradell. "That is to say——" And then he paused. He did not wish to get into a scrape about Mrs. Lupex. He was by no means anxious to encounter her husband in one of his fits of jealousy. But he did like the idea of being talked of as the admirer of a married woman, and he did like the brightness of the lady's eyes. When the unfortunate moth in his semi-blindness whisks himself and his wings within the flame of the candle, and finds himself mutilated and tortured, he even then will not take the lesson, but returns again and again till he is destroyed. Such a moth was poor Cradell. There was no warmth to be got by him from that flame. There was no beauty in the light,—not even the false brilliance of unhallowed love. Injury might come to him,—a pernicious clipping of the wings, which might destroy all power of future flight; injury, and not improbably destruction, if he should persevere. But one may say that no single hour of happiness could accrue to him from his intimacy with Mrs. Lupex. He felt for her no love. He was afraid of her, and, in many respects, disliked her. But to him, in his moth-like weakness, ignorance, and

blindness, it seemed to be a great thing that he should be allowed to fly near the candle. Oh! my friends, if you will but think of it, how many of you have been moths, and are now going about ungracefully with wings more or less burnt off, and with bodies sadly scorched!

But before Mr. Cradell could make up his mind whether or no he would take advantage of the present opportunity for another dip into the flame of the candle,—in regard to which proceeding, however, he could not but feel that the presence of Miss Spruce was objectionable,—the door of the room was opened, and Amelia Roper joined the party.

"Oh, indeed; Mrs. Lupey," she said. "And Mr. Cradell!"

"And Miss Spruce, my dear," said Mrs. Lupey, pointing to the ancient lady.

"I'm only an old woman," said Miss Spruce.

"Oh, yes; I see Miss Spruce," said Amelia. "I was not hinting at anything, I can assure you."

"I should think not, my dear," said Mrs. Lupey.

"Only I didn't know that you two were quite—— That is, when last I heard about it, I fancied—— But if the quarrel's made up, there's nobody more rejoiced than I am."

"The quarrel is made up," said Cradell.

"If Mr. Lupey is satisfied, I'm sure I am," said Amelia.

"Mr. Lupey is satisfied," said Mrs. Lupey; "and let me tell you, my dear, seeing that you are expecting to get married yourself——"

"Mrs. Lupey, I'm not expecting to get married,—not particularly, by any means."

"Oh, I thought you were. And let me tell you, that when you've got a husband of your own, you won't find it so easy to keep everything straight. That's the worst of these lodgings, if there is any little thing, everybody knows it. Don't they, Miss Spruce?"

"Lodgings is so much more comfortable than housekeeping," said Miss Spruce, who lived rather in fear of her relatives, the Ropers.

"Everybody knows it; does he?" said Amelia. "Why, if a gentleman will come home at night tipsy and threaten to murder another gentleman in the same house; and if a lady——" And then Amelia paused, for she knew that the line-of-battle-ship which she was preparing to encounter had within her much power of fighting.

"Well, miss," said Mrs. Lupey, getting on her feet, "and what of the lady?"

Now we may say that the battle had begun, and that the two ships were pledged by the general laws of courage and naval warfare to maintain the contest till one of them should be absolutely disabled, if not blown up or sunk. And at this moment it might be difficult for a bystander to say with which of the combatants rested the better chance of permanent success. Mrs. Lupey had doubtless on her side more matured power, a habit of fighting which had given her infinite skill, a courage which deadened her to the feeling of all wounds while the heat of the

battle should last, and a recklessness which made her almost indifferent whether she sank or swam. But then Amelia carried the greater guns, and was able to pour in heavier metal than her enemy could use; and she, too, swam in her own waters. Should they absolutely come to grappling and boarding, Amelia would no doubt have the best of it; but Mrs. Lupex would probably be too crafty to permit such a proceeding as that. She was, however, ready for the occasion, and greedy for the fight.

"And what of the lady?" said she, in a tone of voice that admitted of no pacific rejoinder.

"A lady, if she is a lady," said Amelia, "will know how to behave herself."

"And you're going to teach me, are you, Miss Roper? I'm sure I'm ever so much obliged to you. It's Manchester manners, I suppose that you prefer?"

"I prefer honest manners, Mrs. Lupex, and decent manners, and manners that won't shock a whole house full of people; and I don't care whether they come from Manchester or London."

"Milliner's manners, I suppose?"

"I don't care whether they are milliner's manners or theatrical, Mrs. Lupex, as long as they're not downright bad manners—as yours are, Mrs. Lupex. And now you've got it. What are you going on for in this way with that young man, till you'll drive your husband into a madhouse with drink and jealousy?"

"Miss Roper! Miss Roper!" said Cradell; "now really——"

"Don't mind her, Mr. Cradell," said Mrs. Lupex; "she's not worthy for you to speak to. And as to that poor fellow Eames, if you've any friendship for him, you'll let him know what she is. My dear, how's Mr. Juniper, of Grogam's house, at Salford? I know all about you, and so shall John Eames, too—poor unfortunate fool of a fellow! Telling me of drink and jealousy, indeed!"

"Yes, telling you! And now you've mentioned Mr. Juniper's name, Mr. Eames, and Mr. Cradell too, may know the whole of it. There's been nothing about Mr. Juniper that I'm ashamed of."

"It would be difficult to make you ashamed of anything, I believe."

"But let me tell you this, Mrs. Lupex, you're not going to destroy the respectability of this house by your goings on."

"It was a bad day for me when I let Lupex bring me into it."

"Then pay your bill, and walk out of it," said Amelia, waving her hand towards the door. "I'll undertake to say there shan't be any notice required. Only you pay mother what you owe, and you're free to go at once."

"I shall go just when I please, and not one hour before. Who are you, you gipsy, to speak to me in this way?"

"And as for going, go you shall, if we have to call in the police to make you."

Amelia, as at this period of the fight she stood fronting her foe with



her arms akimbo, certainly seemed to have the best of the battle. But the bitterness of Mrs. Lupex's tongue had hardly yet produced its greatest results. I am inclined to think that the married lady would have silenced her who was single, had the fight been allowed to rage,—always presuming that no resort to grappling-irons took place. But at this moment Mrs. Roper entered the room, accompanied by her son, and both the combatants for a moment retreated.

"Amelia, what's all this?" said Mrs. Roper, trying to assume a look of agonized amazement.

"Ask Mrs. Lupex," said Amelia.

"And Mrs. Lupex will answer," said that lady. "Your daughter has come in here, and attacked me—in such language—before Mr. Cradell, too——"

"Why doesn't she pay what she owes, and leave the house?" said Amelia.

"Hold your tongue," said her brother. "What she owes is no affair of yours."

"But it's an affair of mine, when I'm insulted by such a creature as that."

"Creature!" said Mrs. Lupex. "I'd like to know which is most like a creature! But I'll tell you what it is, Amelia Roper——"

Here, however, her eloquence was stopped, for Amelia had disappeared through the door, having been pushed out of the room by her brother. Whereupon Mrs. Lupex, having found a sofa convenient for the service, betook herself to hysterics. There for the moment we will leave her, hoping that poor Mrs. Roper was not kept late out of her bed.

"What a deuce of a mess Eames will make of it, if he marries that girl!" Such was Cradell's reflection as he betook himself to his own room. But of his own part in the night's transactions he was rather proud than otherwise, feeling that the married lady's regard for him had been the cause of the battle which had raged. So, likewise, did Paris derive much gratification from the ten years' siege of Troy.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### LILIAN DALE BECOMES A BUTTERFLY.

AND now we will go back to Allington. The same morning that brought to John Eames the two letters which were given in the last chapter but one, brought to the Great House, among others, the following epistle for Adolphus Crosbie. It was from a countess, and was written on pink paper, beautifully creamlaid and scented, ornamented with a coronet and certain singularly-entwined initials. Altogether, the letter was very fashionable and attractive, and Adolphus Crosbie was by no means sorry to receive it.

*" Courcy Castle, September, 186-.*

"MY DEAR MR. CROSBIE,—We have heard of you from the Gazebees, who have come down to us, and who tell us that you are rustivating at a charming little village, in which, among other attractions, there are wood nymphs and water nymphs, to whom much of your time is devoted. As this is just the thing for your taste, I would not for worlds disturb you ; but, if you should ever tear yourself away from the groves and fountains of Allington, we shall be delighted to welcome you here, though you will find us very unromantic, after your late Elysium.

"Lady Dumbello is coming to us, who I know is a favourite of yours. Or is it the other way, and are you a favourite of hers ? I did ask Lady Hartletop, but she cannot get away from the poor marquis, who is, you know, so very infirm. The duke isn't at Gatherum at present, but, of course, I don't mean that that has anything to do with dear Lady Hartletop's not coming to us. I believe we shall have the house full, and shall not want for nymphs either, though I fear they will not be of the wood and water kind. Margaretta and Alexandrina particularly want you to come, as they say you are so clever at making a houseful of people go off well. If you can give us a week before you go back to manage the affairs of the nation, pray do.

"Yours very sincerely,

"ROSINA DE COURCEY."

The Countess De Courcy was a very old friend of Mr. Crosbie's; that is to say, as old friends go in the world in which he had been living. He had known her for the last six or seven years, and had been in the habit of going to all her London balls, and dancing with her daughters everywhere, in a most good-natured and affable way. He had been intimate, from old family relations, with Mr. Mortimer Gazebee, who, though only an attorney of the more distinguished kind, had married the countess's eldest daughter, and now sat in Parliament for the city of Barchester, near to which Courcy Castle was situated. And, to tell the truth honestly at once, Mr. Crosbie had been on terms of great friendship with Lady De Courcy's daughters, the Ladies Margaretta and Alexandrina, —perhaps especially so with the latter, though I would not have my readers suppose by my saying so that anything more tender than friendship had ever existed between them.

Crosbie said nothing about the letter on that morning ; but during the day, or, perhaps, as he thought over the matter in bed, he made up his mind that he would accept Lady De Courcy's invitation. It was not only that he would be glad to see the Gazebees, or glad to stay in the same house with that great master in the high art of fashionable life, Lady Dumbello, or glad to renew his friendship with the Ladies Margaretta and Alexandrina. Had he felt that the circumstances of his engagement with Lily made it expedient for him to stay with her till the end of his holidays, he could have thrown over the De Courcys without a struggle. But he told himself that it would be well for him now to tear himself away from Lily ; or perhaps he said that it would be well for Lily that he should be torn away. He must not teach her to think that they were to live only in the sunlight of each other's eyes during those months, or perhaps years, which must elapse before their engagement could be carried out. Nor must he allow her to suppose that either he or she were to depend solely upon the other for the amusements and employ-

ments of life. In this way he argued the matter very sensibly within his own mind, and resolved, without much difficulty, that he would go to Courcy Castle, and bask for a week in the sunlight of the fashion which would be collected there. The quiet humdrum of his own fireside would come upon him soon enough!

"I think I shall leave you on Wednesday, sir," Crosbie said to the squire at breakfast on Sunday morning.

"Leave us on Wednesday!" said the squire, who had an old-fashioned idea that people who were engaged to marry each other should remain together as long as circumstances could be made to admit of their doing so. "Nothing wrong, is there?"

"O dear, no! But everything must come to an end some day; and as I must make one or two short visits before I get back to town, I might as well go on Wednesday. Indeed, I have made it as late as I possibly could."

"Where do you go from here?" asked Bernard.

"Well, as it happens, only into the next county,—to Courcy Castle." And then there was nothing more said about the matter at that breakfast-table.

It had become their habit to meet together on the Sunday mornings before church, on the lawn belonging to the Small House, and on this day the three gentlemen walked down together, and found Lily and Bell already waiting for them. They generally had some few minutes to spare on those occasions before Mrs. Dale summoned them to pass through the house to church, and such was the case at present. The squire at these times would stand in the middle of the grass-plot, surveying his grounds, and taking stock of the shrubs, and flowers, and fruit-trees round him; for he never forgot that it was all his own, and would thus use this opportunity, as he seldom came down to see the spot on other days. Mrs. Dale, as she would see him from her own window while she was tying on her bonnet, would feel that she knew what was passing through his mind, and would regret that circumstances had forced her to be beholden to him for such assistance. But, in truth, she did not know all that he thought at such times. "It is mine," he would say to himself, as he looked around on the pleasant place. "But it is well for me that they should enjoy it. She is my brother's widow, and she is welcome;—very welcome." I think that if those two persons had known more than they did of each other's hearts and minds they might have loved each other better.

And then Crosbie told Lily of his intention. "On Wednesday!" she said, turning almost pale with emotion as she heard this news. He had told her abruptly, not thinking, probably, that such tidings would affect her so strongly.

"Well, yes. I have written to Lady De Courcy and said Wednesday. It wouldn't do for me exactly to drop everybody, and perhaps ——"

"Oh, no! And, Adolplus, you don't suppose I begrudge your going. Only it does seem so sudden; does it not?"

"You see, I've been here over six weeks."

"Yes; you've been very good. When I think of it, what a six weeks it has been! I wonder whether the difference seems to you as great as it does to me. I've left off being a grub, and begun to be a butterfly."

"But you mustn't be a butterfly when you're married, Lily."

"No; not in that sense. But I meant that my real position in the world,—that for which I would fain hope that I was created,—opened to me only when I knew you and knew that you loved me. But mamma is calling us, and we must go through to church. Going on Wednesday! There are only three days more, then!"

"Yes, just three days," he said, as he took her on his arm and passed through the house on to the road.

"And when are we to see you again?" she asked, as they reached the churchyard.

"Ah, who is to say that yet? We must ask the Chairman of Committees when he will let me go again." Then there was nothing more said, and they all followed the squire through the little porch and up to the big family-pew in which they all sat. Here the squire took his place in one special corner which he had occupied ever since his father's death, and from which he read the responses loudly and plainly,—so loudly and plainly, that the parish clerk could by no means equal him, though with emulous voice he still made the attempt. "T' squire'd like to be squire, and parson, and clerk, and everything; so a would," the poor clerk would say, when complaining of the ill-usage which he suffered.

If Lily's prayers were interrupted by her new sorrow, I think that her fault in that respect would be forgiven. Of course she had known that Crosbie was not going to remain at Allington much longer. She knew quite as well as he did the exact day on which his leave of absence came to its end, and the hour at which it behoved him to walk into his room at the General Committee Office. She had taught herself to think that he would remain with them up to the end of his vacation, and now she felt as a schoolboy would feel who was told suddenly, a day or two before the time, that the last week of his holidays was to be taken from him. The grievance would have been slight had she known it from the first; but what schoolboy could stand such a shock, when the loss amounted to two-thirds of his remaining wealth? Lily did not blame her lover. She did not even think that he ought to stay. She would not allow herself to suppose that he could propose anything that was unkind. But she felt her loss, and more than once, as she knelt at her prayers, she wiped a hidden tear from her eyes.

Crosbie also was thinking of his departure more than he should have done during Mr. Boyce's sermon. "It's easy listening to him," Mrs. Hearn used to say of her husband's successor. "It don't give one much trouble following him into his arguments." Mr. Crosbie perhaps found the diffi-

culty greater than did Mrs. Hearn, and would have devoted his mind more perfectly to the discourse had the argument been deeper. It is very hard, that necessity of listening to a man who says nothing. On this occasion Crosbie ignored the necessity altogether, and gave up his mind to the consideration of what it might be expedient that he should say to Lily before he went. He remembered well those few words which he had spoken in the first ardour of his love, pleading that an early day might be fixed for their marriage. And he remembered, also, how prettily Lily had yielded to him. "Only do not let it be too soon," she had said. Now he must unsay what he had then said. He must plead against his own pleadings, and explain to her that he desired to postpone the marriage rather than to hasten it—a task which, I presume, must always be an unpleasant one for any man engaged to be married. "I might as well do it at once," he said to himself, as he bobbed his head forward into his hands by way of returning thanks for the termination of Mr. Boyce's sermon.

As he had only three days left, it was certainly as well that he should do this at once. Seeing that Lily had no fortune, she could not in justice complain of a prolonged engagement. That was the argument which he used in his own mind. But he as often told himself that she would have very great ground of complaint if she were left for a day unnecessarily in doubt as to this matter. Why had he rashly spoken those hasty words to her in his love, betraying himself into all manner of scrapes, as a school-boy might do, or such a one as Johnny Eames? What an ass he had been not to have remembered himself and to have been collected,—not to have bethought himself on the occasion of all that might be due to Adolphus Crosbie! And then the idea came upon him whether he had not altogether made himself an ass in this matter. And as he gave his arm to Lily outside the church-door, he shrugged his shoulders while making that reflection. "It is too late now," he said to himself; and then turned round and made some sweet little loving speech to her. Adolphus Crosbie was a clever man; and he meant also to be a true man,—if only the temptations to falsehood might not be too great for him.

"Lily," he said to her, "will you walk in the fields after lunch?"

Walk in the fields with him! Of course she would. There were only three days left, and would she not give up to him every moment of her time, if he would accept of all her moments? And then they lunched at the Small House, Mrs. Dale having promised to join the dinner-party at the squire's table. The squire did not eat any lunch, excusing himself on the plea that lunch in itself was a bad thing. "He can eat lunch at his own house," Mrs. Dale afterwards said to Bell. "And I've often seen him take a glass of sherry." While thinking of this, Mrs. Dale made her own dinner. If her brother-in-law would not eat at her board, neither would she eat at his.

And then in a few minutes Lily had on her hat, in place of that

decorous, church-going bonnet which Crosbie was wont to abuse with a lover's privilege, feeling well assured that he might say what he liked of the bonnet as long as he would praise the hat. "Only three days," she said, as she walked down with him across the lawn at a quick pace. But she said it in a voice which made no complaint,—which seemed to say simply this,—that as the good time was to be so short, they must make the most of it. And what compliment could be paid to a man so sweet as that? What flattery could be more gratifying? All my earthly heaven is with you; and now, for the delight of these immediately present months or so, there are left to me but three days of this heaven! Come, then; I will make the most of what happiness is given to me. Crosbie felt it all as she felt it, and recognized the extent of the debt he owed her. "I'll come down to them for a day at Christmas, though it be only for a day," he said to himself. Then he reflected that as such was his intention, it might be well for him to open his present conversation with a promise to that effect.

"Yes, Lily; there are only three days left now. But I wonder whether—I suppose you'll all be at home at Christmas?"

"At home at Christmas?—of course we shall be at home. You don't mean to say you'll come to us!"

"Well; I think I will, if you'll have me."

"Oh! that will make such a difference. Let me see. That will only be three months. And to have you here on Christmas Day! I would sooner have you then than on any other day in the year."

"It will only be for one day, Lily. I shall come to dinner on Christmas Eve, and must go away the day after."

"But you will come direct to our house!"

"If you can spare me a room."

"Of course we can. So we could now. Only when you came, you know——" Then she looked up into his face and smiled.

"When I came, I was the squire's friend and your cousin's, rather than yours. But that's all changed now."

"Yes; you're my friend now,—mine specially. I'm to be now and always your own special, dearest friend;—eh, Adolphus?" And then she exacted from him the repetition of the promise which he had so often given her.

By this time they had passed through the grounds of the Great House and were in the fields. "Lily," said he, speaking rather suddenly, and making her feel by his manner that something of importance was to be said; "I want to say a few words to you about,—business." And he gave a little laugh as he spoke the last word, making her fully understand that he was not quite at his ease.

"Of course I'll listen. And, Adolphus, pray don't be afraid about me. What I mean is, don't think that I can't bear cares and troubles. I can bear anything as long as you love me. I say that because I'm afraid I seemed to complain about your going. I didn't mean to."

"I never thought you complained, dearest. Nothing can be better than you are at all times and in every way. A man would be very hard to please if you didn't please him."

"If I can only please you——"

"You do please me, in everything. Dear Lily, I think I found an angel when I found you. But now about this business. Perhaps I'd better tell you everything."

"Oh, yes! tell me everything."

"But then you mustn't misunderstand me. And if I talk about money, you mustn't suppose that it has anything to do with my love for you."

"I wish for your sake that I wasn't such a little pauper."

"What I mean to say is this, that if I seem to be anxious about money, you must not suppose that that anxiety bears any reference whatever to my affection for you. I should love you just the same, and look forward just as much to my happiness in marrying you, whether you were rich or poor. You understand that?"

She did not quite understand him; but she merely pressed his arm, so as to encourage him to go on. She presumed that he intended to tell her something as to their future mode of life—something which he supposed it might not be pleasant for her to hear, and she was determined to show him that she would receive it pleasantly.

"You know," said he, "how anxious I have been that our marriage should not be delayed. To me, of course, it must be everything now to call you my own as soon as possible." In answer to which little declaration of love, she merely pressed his arm again, the subject being one on which she had not herself much to say.

"Of course I must be very anxious, but I find it not so easy as I expected."

"You know what I said, Adolphus. I said that I thought we had better wait. I'm sure mamma thinks so. And if we can only see you now and then——"

"That will be a matter of course. But, as I was saying—— Let me see. Yes,—all that waiting will be intolerable to me. It is such a bore for a man when he has made up his mind on such a matter as marriage, not to make the change at once, especially when he is going to take to himself such a little angel as you are," and as he spoke these loving words, his arm was again put round her waist; "but——" and then he stopped. He wanted to make her understand that this change of intention on his part was caused by the unexpected misconduct of her uncle. He desired that she should know exactly how the matter stood; that he had been led to suppose that her uncle would give her some small fortune; that he had been disappointed, and had a right to feel the disappointment keenly; and that in consequence of this blow to his expectations, he must put off his marriage. But he wished her also to understand at the same time that this did not in the least mar his love for her; that he did not join her at all in her uncle's fault. All this he was



anxious to convey to her, but he did not know how to get it said in a manner that would not be offensive to her personally, and that should not appear to accuse himself of sordid motives. He had begun by declaring that he would tell her all; but sometimes it is not easy, that task of telling a person everything. There are things which will not get themselves told.

"You mean, dearest," said she, "that you cannot afford to marry at once."

"Yes; that is it. I had expected that I should be able, but ——"

Did any man in love ever yet find himself able to tell the lady whom he loved that he was very much disappointed on discovering that she had got no money? If so, his courage, I should say, was greater than his love. Crosbie found himself unable to do it, and thought himself cruelly used because of the difficulty. The delay to which he intended to subject her was occasioned, as he felt, by the squire, and not by himself. He was ready to do his part, if only the squire had been willing to do the part which properly belonged to him. The squire would not; and, therefore, neither could he,—not as yet. Justice demanded that all this should be understood; but when he came to the telling of it, he found that the story would not form itself properly. He must let the thing go, and bear the injustice, consoling himself as best he might by the reflection that he at least was behaving well in the matter.

"It won't make me unhappy, Adolphus."

"Will it not?" said he. "As regards myself, I own that I cannot bear the delay with so much indifference."

"Nay, my love; but you should not misunderstand me," she said, stopping and facing him on the path in which they were walking. "I suppose I ought to protest, according to the common rules, that I would rather wait. Young ladies are expected to say so. If you were pressing me to marry at once, I should say so, no doubt. But now, as it is, I will be more honest. I have only one wish in the world, and that is, to be your wife,—to be able to share everything with you. The sooner we can be together the better it will be,—at any rate, for me. There; will that satisfy you?"

"My own, own Lily!"

"Yes, your own Lily. You shall have no cause to doubt me, dearest. But I do not expect that I am to have everything exactly as I want it. I say again, that I shall not be unhappy in waiting. How can I be unhappy while I feel certain of your love? I was disappointed just now when you said that you were going so soon; and I am afraid I showed it. But those little things are more unendurable than the big things."

"Yes; that's very true."

"But there are three more days, and I mean to enjoy them so much! And then you will write to me: and you will come at Christmas. And next year, when you have your holiday, you will come down to us again; will you not?"

"You may be quite sure of that."

"And so the time will go by till it suits you to come and take me. I shall not be unhappy."

"I, at any rate, shall be impatient."

"Ah, men always are impatient. It is one of their privileges, I suppose. And I don't think that a man ever has the same positive and complete satisfaction in knowing that he is loved, which a girl feels. You are my bird that I have shot with my own gun; and the assurance of my success is sufficient for my happiness."

"You have bowled me over, and know that I can't get up again."

"I don't know about can't. I would let you up quick enough, if you wished it."

How he made his loving assurance that he did not wish it, never would or could wish it, the reader will readily understand. And then he considered that he might as well leave all those money questions as they now stood. His real object had been to convince her that their joint circumstances did not admit of an immediate marriage; and as to that she completely understood him. Perhaps, during the next three days, some opportunity might arise for explaining the whole matter to Mrs. Dale. At any rate, he had declared his own purpose honestly, and no one could complain of him.

On the following day they all rode over to Guestwick together,—the all consisting of the two girls, with Bernard and Crosbie. Their object was to pay two visits,—one to their very noble and highly exalted ally, the Lady Julia De Guest; and the other to their much humbler and better known friend, Mrs. Eames. As Guestwick Manor lay on their road into the town, they performed the grander ceremony the first. The present Earl De Guest, brother of that Lady Fanny who ran away with Major Dale, was an unmarried nobleman, who devoted himself chiefly to the breeding of cattle. And as he bred very good cattle, taking infinite satisfaction in the employment, devoting all his energies thereto, and abstaining from all prominently evil courses, it should be acknowledged that he was not a bad member of society. He was a thorough-going old Tory, whose proxy was always in the hand of the leader of his party; and who seldom himself went near the metropolis, unless called thither by some occasion of cattle-showing. He was a short, stumpy man, with red cheeks and a round face; who was usually to be seen till dinner-time dressed in a very old shooting coat, with breeches, gaiters, and very thick shoes. He lived generally out of doors, and was almost as great in the preserving of game as in the breeding of oxen. He knew every acre of his own estate, and every tree upon it, as thoroughly as a lady knows the ornaments in her drawing-room. There was no gap in a fence of which he did not remember the exact bearings, no path hither or thither as to which he could not tell the why and the wherefore. He had been in his earlier years a poor man as regarded his income,—very poor, seeing that he was an earl. But he was not at present by any means an impoverished man,

having been taught a lesson by the miseries of his father and grandfather, and having learned to live within his means. Now, as he was going down the vale of years, men said that he was becoming rich, and that he had ready money to spend,—a position in which no Lord De Guest had found himself for many generations back. His father and grandfather had been known as spendthrifts; and now men said that this earl was a miser.

There was not much of nobility in his appearance; but they greatly mistook Lord De Guest who conceived that on that account his pride of place was not dear to his soul. His peerage dated back to the time of King John, and there were but three lords in England whose patents had been conferred before his own. He knew what privileges were due to him on behalf of his blood, and was not disposed to abate one jot of them. He was not loud in demanding them. As he went through the world he sent no trumpeters to the right or left, proclaiming that the Earl De Guest was coming. When he spread his board for his friends, which he did but on rare occasions, he entertained them simply, with a mild, tedious, old-fashioned courtesy. We may say that, if properly treated, the earl never walked over anybody. But he could, if ill-treated, be grandly indignant; and if attacked, could hold his own against all the world. He knew himself to be every inch an earl, pottering about after his oxen with his muddy gaiters and red cheeks, as much as though he were glittering with stars in courtly royal ceremonies among his peers at Westminster;—ay, more an earl than any of those who use their nobility for pageant purposes. Woe be to him who should mistake that old coat for a badge of rural degradation! Now and again some unlucky wight did make such mistake, and had to do his penance very uncomfortably.

With the earl lived a maiden sister, the Lady Julia. Bernard Dale's father had, in early life, run away with one sister, but no suitor had been fortunate enough to induce the Lady Julia to run with him. Therefore she still lived, in maiden blessedness, as mistress of Guestwick Manor; and as such had no mean opinion of the high position which destiny had called upon her to fill. She was a tedious, dull, virtuous old woman, who gave herself infinite credit for having remained all her days in the home of her youth, probably forgetting, in her present advanced years, that her temptations to leave it had not been strong or numerous. She generally spoke of her sister Fanny with some little contempt, as though that poor lady had degraded herself in marrying a younger brother. She was as proud of her own position as was the earl her brother, but her pride was maintained with more of outward show and less of inward nobility. It was hardly enough for her that the world should know that she was a De Guest, and therefore she had assumed little pompous ways and certain airs of condescension which did not make her popular with her neighbours.

The intercourse between Guestwick Manor and Allington was not very frequent or very cordial. Soon after the running away of the Lady

Fanny, the two families had agreed to acknowledge their connection with each other, and to let it be known by the world that they were on friendly terms. Either that course was necessary to them, or the other course, of letting it be known that they were enemies. Friendship was the less troublesome, and therefore the two families called on each other from time to time, and gave each other dinners about once a year. The earl regarded the squire as a man who had deserted his politics, and had thereby forfeited the respect due to him as an hereditary land magnate; and the squire was wont to be-little the earl as one who understood nothing of the outer world. At Guestwick Manor Bernard was to some extent a favourite. He was actually a relative, having in his veins blood of the De Guests, and was not the less a favourite because he was the heir to Allington, and because the blood of the Dales was older even than that of the noble family to which he was allied. When Bernard should come to be the squire, then indeed there might be cordial relations between Guestwick Manor and Allington; unless, indeed, the earl's heir and the squire's heir should have some fresh cause of ill-will between themselves.

They found Lady Julia sitting in her drawing-room alone, and introduced to her Mr. Crosbie in due form. The fact of Lily's engagement was of course known at the manor, and it was quite understood that her intended husband was now brought over that he might be looked at and approved. Lady Julia made a very elaborate curtsy, and expressed a hope that her young friend might be made happy in that sphere of life to which it had pleased God to call her.

"I hope I shall, Lady Julia," said Lily, with a little laugh; "at any rate I mean to try."

"We all try, my dear, but many of us fail to try with sufficient energy of purpose. It is only by doing our duty that we can hope to be happy, whether in single life or in married."

"Miss Dale means to be a dragon of perfection in the performance of hers," said Crosbie.

"A dragon!" said Lady Julia. "No; I hope Miss Lily Dale will never become a dragon." And then she turned to her nephew. It may be as well to say at once that she never forgave Mr. Crosbie the freedom of the expression which he had used. He had been in the drawing-room of Guestwick Manor for two minutes only, and it did not become him to talk about dragons. "Bernard," she said, "I heard from your mother yesterday. I am afraid she does not seem to be very strong." And then there was a little conversation, not very interesting in its nature, between the aunt and the nephew as to the general health of Lady Fanny.

"I didn't know my aunt was so unwell," said Bell.

"She isn't ill," said Bernard. "She never is ill; but then she is never well."

"Your aunt," said Lady Julia, seeming to put a touch of sarcasm into the tone of her voice as she repeated the word—"your aunt has

never enjoyed good health since she left this house; but that is a long time ago."

"A very long time," said Crosbie, who was not accustomed to be left in his chair silent. "You, Dale, at any rate, can hardly remember it."

"But I can remember it," said Lady Julia, gathering herself up. "I can remember when my sister Fanny was recognized as the beauty of the country. It is a dangerous gift, that of beauty." •

"Very dangerous," said Crosbie. Then Lily laughed again, and Lady Julia became more angry than ever. What odious man was this whom her neighbours were going to take into their very bosom! But she had heard of Mr. Crosbie before, and Mr. Crosbie also had heard of her.

"By-the-by, Lady Julia," said he, "I think I know some very dear friends of yours."

"Very dear friends is a very strong word. I have not many very dear friends."

"I mean the Gazebees. I have heard Mortimer Gazebee and Lady Amelia speak of you."

Whereupon, Lady Julia confessed that she did know the Gazebees. Mr. Gazebee, she said, was a man who in early life had wanted many advantages, but still he was a very estimable person. He was now in Parliament, and she understood that he was making himself useful. She had not quite approved of Lady Amelia's marriage at the time, and so she had told her very old friend Lady De Courcy; but— And then Lady Julia said many words in praise of Mr. Gazebee, which seemed to amount to this; that he was an excellent sort of man, with a full conviction of the too great honour done to him by the earl's daughter who had married him, and a complete consciousness that even that marriage had not put him on a par with his wife's relations, or even with his wife. And then it came out that Lady Julia in the course of the next week was going to meet the Gazebees at Courcy Castle.

"I am delighted to think that I shall have the pleasure of seeing you there," said Crosbie.

"Indeed!" said Lady Julia.

"I am going to Courcy on Wednesday. That, I fear, will be too early to allow of my being of any service to your ladyship."

Lady Julia drew herself up, and declined the escort which Mr. Crosbie had seemed to offer. It grieved her to find that Lily Dale's future husband was an intimate friend of her friend's, and it especially grieved her to find that he was now going to that friend's house. It was a grief to her, and she showed that it was. It also grieved Crosbie to find that Lady Julia was to be a fellow guest with himself at Courcy Castle; but he did not show it. He expressed nothing but smiles and civil self-congratulation on the matter, pretending that he would have much delight in again meeting Lady Julia; but, in truth, he would have given much could he

have invented any manœuvre by which her ladyship might have been kept at home.

"What a horrid old woman she is," said Lily, as they rode back down the avenue. "I beg your pardon, Bernard; for, of course, she is your aunt."

"Yes; she is my aunt; and though I am not very fond of her, I deny that she is a horrid old woman. She never murdered anybody, or robbed anybody, or stole away any other woman's lover."

"I should think not," said Lily.

"She says her prayers earnestly, I have no doubt," continued Bernard, "and gives away money to the poor, and would sacrifice to-morrow any desire of her own to her brother's wish. I acknowledge that she is ugly, and pompous, and that, being a woman, she ought not to have such a long black beard on her upper lip."

"I don't care a bit about her beard," said Lily. "But why did she tell me to do my duty? I didn't go there to have a sermon preached to me."

"And why did she talk about beauty being dangerous?" said Bell. "Of course, we all knew what she meant."

"I didn't know at all what she meant," said Lily; "and I don't know now."

"I think she's a charming woman, and I shall be especially civil to her at Lady De Courcy's," said Crosbie.

And in this way, saying hard things of the poor old spinster whom they had left, they made their way into Guestwick, and again dismounted at Mrs. Eames's door.

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## Reflections on My Daughter's Marriage.

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NEVER shall I read love-stories with satisfaction any more : at last I know why in these later days they have had for me a suspicious, a fretful interest at best. The writers are partial, thoughtless, unkind. They are all in a league with the lovers ; and if only *they* bring the pleasing miseries, the timely *contretemps*, the dear doubts, the bracing difficulties of courtship to a terminus at the altar, and the settlements are good, and fair-haired consequences are foreseen, riding on ponies at a date reasonably subsequent—all's well in the world.

And so no doubt it is—for the young people ; but we are not all young at one time, and that is what I am thinking of at present. As Love and Youth roll along on the homeward way from church, I do not deny that the Fates are visibly harnessed to the wedding coach: it *is* a triumph, and a triumph which nobody grudges them—no, not the curmudgeonest of men. There may be some difference of view between them and us, who also have ridden in the car, and have alighted in the mire, and are now as much accustomed to the harness as to the coach-box (taking our turn in them with the Fates, in fact), but it is not that which makes a man so serious on his daughter's wedding-day. Of course he scans her future anxiously, near and far as he may ; but there is nowhere anything to dread, perhaps—nowhere anything but assurance or hope. It is all the same—he is as serious as ever. His thoughts are “long, long thoughts,” and many, and full of pain. The marriage-ceremony is as solemn a thing to him as to the bride herself—as solemn, as significant, and very sad besides ; and yet who thinks of *his* part in it ? He is no more considered than his grandfather's portrait is, smiling unconcerned from the wall. Papa is old and grave, grey and silent : his time is past. What has he to do but to give the bride away, and (if necessary) get a nice comfortable old housekeeper to fill her place ? This is an affair of love and youth : does he understand them even ? It seems not. Opinion is against any such presumption. The young, who are authoritative on the subject, are more than sceptical—they are saucy in their hearts ; and of all the story-tellers whom I have read, not one has ever deemed it worth while to consider what an old fellow's thoughts and sentiments may be when his daughter has kissed him farewell and is gone from his house.

We do, indeed, meet a sentence or two sometimes, in the last hurried page of a story, about “the blank that is left in the old man's heart,” or how it was long before he could reconcile himself to the loss of that bright being whose presence added warmth to his hearth and light to his dwelling. But this is all, and it is all heartless. Such poor phrases as these are the



hackneys of people who feel that there is something to be said, and know and care not what: like the returns of killed and wounded in a victorious despatch, they are tagged on at the end rather to glorify the winning than in sympathy with the losing party. Not the sufferings, but the success is illustrated.

The blank in the old man's heart? the light that is gone from his dwelling? these lovers and novelists are very shallow. That is much, but it is not all—not more than can be seen or imagined by the most casual observer. The blank is easily filled at once by the image of those rosy prospective consequences—the light that is lost with a daughter's presence is very well restored by the reflection of her own home happiness. Is it not always so with people who have come to the time of grey hair and wrinkled visages? All their joy is a reflected light—from their youth which is past, from the life around them which is not theirs, from the world which is as near to them now, though far away, as this. There is nothing new or strange, then, in such comfort. But yet when I think upon the hoarded years of the little girl whom I gave away yesterday—the years which, as one by one they were added to her life, and made space for her growth, and ripened her beauty, and gave their successive seasons of sun and rain for her thoughts and affections to flourish in, I took as gifts bestowed on *me*—when I count them over and see that now she is gone, carrying them all and their fruits away, I do repine somewhat on that account indeed. The blank is there—I certainly feel it. Suppose the pony does trot up to my door one day, and a little lady with my eyes under her brows runs in to hug me: well, her mother was once more mine than a grandchild can be, and the story is only to be repeated when *ma'mselle* grows up to be twenty. Then it will be Master Jack's turn, who has got my girl; and I hope I shall be there to comfort him. And I hope I shall be comfortable: only by that time I shall have gone down into another generation, and shall probably care for Jack's feelings no more than he now cares for mine. Every man of us, we are several creatures in this one life: the seasons are not so various: there's nothing so much unlike a cat as a kitten. Once I was a day-old husband like Jack. By-and-by he will be as I am: and then I shall be like my grandfather's portrait on the wall (if I live), smiling over my granddaughter's wedding-table (if I am invited thereto) with small concern. Nobody cares for me now that it is my turn—I shan't care for anybody when that it is *his*. Not that the prospect gives me comfort—it rather weights my mind with that *triste* old Shakspearian burden, "So runs the world away." I wish sometimes the world had other courses, and could learn to be eccentric in certain particulars: but we wish, and wish, and what do we know? Suppose we *were* all young together, fathers, daughters, uncles, cousins—would that profit us? Suppose our mothers could keep the freshness, and innocence, and beauty of their youth for their sons to see when they in their turn come to twenty years: it would indeed be a delightful wholesome dispensation for the

sons, but for the daughters it would be a different thing, wouldn't it? We must be content, whether or not, and be as much, and love as much, as we can, in every stage of life to which it pleases God to call us.

Such conclusions, however—reasonable and religious as they may be—do not fill the blank in papa's forsaken bosom. Not that there is really a vacuum there after all. Turn to the woods, they are haunted by dryads and hamadryads yet: only when you put your spectacles on to look for them, they are gone. And so when I search the place which my little girl filled so long, there is nothing; my household goddess has left an utter blank behind. But if the too-eagerly inquiring thought is put aside only for a moment, a troop of living memories come in, a pleasant company of ghosts, every one with the same sweet face—as it is, as it was in a hundred times and places which I wonder are not forgotten. I daresay these visitors will keep the old nest warm enough, though the bird has flown to build a new one. At any rate, I'll take care not to stare at them to drive them away. They are my progeny, too—these memories, these ghosts; they are my love children, the fruit of my love for her, of hers for me. There are husbands so fond of their wives, that as long as those larger darlings live they seem to take account of the little ones they bring only as so many accidental blessings that adorn *her*; as proofs, as pledges, as superfluous household bounties (who heeds the wine that overbrims the cup?); as gifts of fortune above measure, which may wait to be enjoyed. But when the wife dies, then the husband, turning to the children, finds how dear they are, and how busy they have been all their little lives weaving webs of love about him to keep his heart whole at this very time. And now I know how that may be. This shadowy progeny of mine, I took no note of them at their birth, nor guessed what they might be to me one day, long after they had been forgotten. Observations of a babe's "pretty ways," the surprise of some child-wise saying, simple nursery scenes translated into poems at the moment and forthwith jostled out of mind by others, holidays, times of sickness, birthnight rejoicings, apparitions in joyful new frocks, and so forth, these things were little more to me when they happened than the varying light that marks the progress of the day. Accompanied by so much emotion, glad or sorry, they came and went, and were never heeded more than the delights and disappointments of a garden, which every day is sure to renew. But now that there is no more light and the garden itself is conveyed away—now that I am dispossessed of her who was the spring and centre of all these circumstances, the change arrives. Mamma is dead, and the children come flocking round my knees—into my mind, I mean. The pen I flourished yesterday in St. James's vestry was an enchanter's wand, bringing a thousand departed memories to life again—invoking the many sweet ghosts of her which came into existence as year by year she put on a new life, and which henceforth are to be my best companions.

St. James's officiating clergyman is potent; behold what he has done

for me already. But he cannot lay these spirits in any sea if he tries; and besides being mostly under age, they are for other good reasons not marriageable. From any Jack who would carry *them* off, the Lord deliver me; but I am in no danger. That was provided for from the beginning by Him who disdains not to make enchanter's wands of goose-quills for distressed parents; who, unsuspected of the very hearts in which they are stored, treasures up past joys and sorrows for our future good. And the wonderful, though ever so well-known thing about that is, that the joys and sorrows grow alike in the interval: the joys are none without a touch of sadness, the sting has perished in the sorrows. Of both the lees are thrown down; they are no longer clouded with the muddy emotions of our natural clay, and have grown by age into a clear, pure, true vintage of life.

Well, then, perhaps I am better off with my shadows than with the realities? And what are realities? When my son-in-law took Margaret home, no doubt he fancied *he* had got a reality; but I believe her existence to him, as a fact, altogether depends upon the existence of the Idea of her in his mind. That is what the metaphysicians would say. The young man feels that he possesses her, because he hears her say now and then, "Dear Jack, I am yours," and because he sees her every day sitting at his fireside. But eyes and ears are mere mechanical apparatus; the impression they convey is the thing: and if the impression remains, it matters little whether it was made an hour or a year ago, I suppose. These two young people cannot always be together; and when they are apart, that happy sense of belonging to each other which makes them so paradisaical just now, depends for existence on ideas, images, memories not much stronger, perhaps, than mine olden ones, brought out, as they are, like "invisible ink" by fire. Margaret sits by John's hearth: this is entirely an affair between her and the fireplace. Margaret sitting by the hearth is to anybody else nothing but an idea, an image, a conception of Margaret existing in the mind. Now my mind is possessed with a hundred such conceptions, as vivid as if they were only an hour old, but mellowed, deeper: conceptions of Margaret *mine*. And so I hope I have satisfied myself on philosophical principles that I have not really lost my daughter at all. On the contrary, I have found a series of daughters, whom I had forgotten till the last of the line, a grown woman, came to a termination at the altar.

*Imprimis.* A baby-daughter: an exquisite mysterious possession, not at all included in yesterday's marriage articles. It remains mine. I dare say the copyright will be infringed, and for that there is no remedy; only in such an event I shall take care to point out to my son-in-law in what particulars his copy is a piracy, and inferior to the original: as copies are sure to be. At any rate, nobody but myself knows now what the original was; and so a little disparagement, the taking down of Master Jack a peg or two in *another* hour of triumph, will be safe as well as sweet. What it *was* did I say? *Is!* Let me not lose hold upon the metaphysical persuasion by which I prove my company of ghosts and memories to be living things, real possessions of to-day. The child *is*. There it still lies

where I first beheld it, bundled high up on mamma's pillow, and mamma gazing up to it with strangely clear though weary eyes, and seeing in that contented little red face beauties which it certainly gave every prospect of developing—in due course. It lies in my arms (why not? sense is only the vehicle of sensation), and I am melted and moved so strangely that I think of the pool of Bethesda and the angels troubling it! Is *this* little one to bring healing and sweetness to the turgid shallows of my life? Too much disturbed, I give baby back, saying, "I wonder whether it will grow to be very clever and good!" Says mamma, in her pretty feeble voice, "I think her hair will curl!"

That is one of them.

Then there is that other one—not a baby now—whom I met on Cowes pier one day, and wondered whether she belonged to me. Because I had not seen my child for three months; and this one was too miraculously beautiful; and a huge, common, commonest seaman carried her, with as much tenderness and admiration as if she had been *his* Margaret, his pearl—the prize of some piratical expedition to I know not what Angelic Islands. But she was mine: there was her nurse (talking to a gentleman with rings in his ears hard by) to prove it, as well as her own half-remembering eyes, as she looked and looked, and knew me at last, blushing! I think it must have been that blush, little one! so perplexingly like and so unlike a woman's, which has kept you alive in my heart as you then were, to this day: a separate being, a complete delight. Timidly stretching out those round white arms, you surprised my love in its deepest, most secret place; and there you have been shut in with it ever since, inaccessible to the changes of time.

Then there is the little maid, two or three years older than the above, who used to pretend that the sthmoke came into her eyes (when there was no smoke) whenever I told her stories of poor blackamoors, and how cold their tropical toes get as they go begging about in our bitter winter weather. Why was this four-year-old female stoic ashamed of her sympathetic tears?

Then there is the young lady who, at seven, fell in love with Robert Poltimore (on the occasion of his being breeched), and who loved him so dear that, when he went away to school, she cried for fifteen minutes under the apple-tree where they parted. The ghosts that have come back to me from that period are two: one with the child's flushed and tearful face as she banged at the boughs for an apple for Robert to carry away with him (as he did, in his unsentimental trousers-pocket); the other, a little figure that stood at my study table next day, gravely and anxiously dictating a letter for her lover. The language of that serious *billet* is all written down in my memory, and I can call the pretty figure to table, and hear her all over again whenever I please.

Then have I also a dear Little Dorrit of a daughter, who, while I thought her still a child, came out as an old woman. That was when somebody died who was precious to both of us. And she who then

suppressed the grief of her young heart lest it should give a greater grief to me—who smoothed down her hair to look like a woman's, and took thought, and kept our humble household in order till she could conveniently break down, too (in a quiet way)—this one is the dearest daughter of the whole series, and neither is *she* included in the marriage contract. The saintly child and the devoted woman are different beings; the former almost surely becomes the latter, but the process is not to be reversed; and, by your leave, son-in-law, the child remains mine. And were the wife to turn out ever so wicked hereafter, it is my opinion that the daughter, *that* daughter, ought to go to heaven. Can no philosopher make a theory which will provide for her translation in this wise? Why may I not carry her thither myself—if I am only good enough to secure that prerogative—taking my heart, in which she is treasured, in my hand, and saying, "Here is an angel indeed, who cannot be gainsaid!"

Already I have written down a half-dozen sweet spirits, and recalled a hundred living memories; why should those of a later time be added which are too near to be altogether unmixed with a consciously selfish pain? But I am getting better. I'm not so morose now as I was when I found my girl weeping at her window in the dark, because that young man had thought proper to enliven existence by quarrelling with her; nor do I so much resent the time when, instead of playing me Beethoven's symphonies or Mozart's Requiem after dinner, she persisted in *lieder ohne worte*, and Weber's love-laden waltzes. *Did* she play them to me, I wonder? I could not believe it at the time, for an excellent reason. When I fell asleep over my favourite Beethoven the player used to cease; when I pretended to slumber over the *lieder*, she went on all the same. I knew how it was then; those maundering *pianissimo* touches were all addressed to Another, who was not in the room even. Well, he was as truly there with her, perhaps, as my Little Dorrit is with me, and Jack is welcome to as much of her as is his. I have shown (and it is enough), that there is not necessarily a blank in papa's heart after the wedding, and if that's what the novelist's sympathy is confined to, his emotions may be spared in all good honest cases where sympathy is deserved.

What I wish is, that a little more account were taken of an old fellow's present feelings and position on his girl's marriage day. Blank or no blank, it is for him a time inexpressibly solemn, and moving, and tender; as his hour of dissolution must be, even though he is sure of going straight to paradise. And is not *this* in some sort an hour of dissolution too?—an hour when a life well loved as his own is parting from him—when its days and its nights pass before his eyes in a long procession to this last, and its many joys and fears, its painful and its hopeful memories rise up together as if they also were about to bid farewell to the heart that bred them? Well, the victim need not trouble himself in that hour to hide his face, for nobody guesses or cares what may be dying within. It is unkind, I say. Why, if you had but a little spring which one day you found bubbling up in your garden newly, and it became first a wilful,

bright brook, and broadened year by year into a deep, and stately, and thoughtful stream; and you went down and found it all flowing away with a glad noise, leaving you nothing but the channel for your contemplation, I should say there was something pathetic in that, if you had loved the stream as familiar brooks are often loved. And your neighbours would take the trouble to ponder your loss, and to consider what sympathy was due to you in such a case. But if the fountain wells up in the garden of your life, *another* life, and the brook was a child, and the stream is a beautiful, thoughtful woman, that is another thing, it seems. The gentleman into whose grounds the stream is running away is an object of universal interest; but as for you, you are regarded less than the impressive parson who ratifies the transfer.

Oh, this tyranny of youth! The world is all for it—all joys but money-getting are for young men and maidens. Beauty, poetry, love, day-dreaming—how absurd are we to talk of what they alone understand, and which is theirs only! Beauty with *our* leathern visages! Poetry?—yes, Milton perhaps, but not Byron—not the stars, the woods, the moonlit hill, the sounding sea? Love? we know no more about it now than Dead Sea apes, who also have a certain memory of the passion; and in our dreams we snore fatally.

It is not now as it has been of yore:  
Turn wheresoe'er we may  
By night or day,  
The things which we have seen we now can see no more.

No doubt there is some truth in this; but there is little justice and no humanity whatever in turning it into triumph, or using it in neglect or contempt of us oldsters. Other affections there are besides the tender ones, so called—other love besides the grand passion, as true, perhaps, and as dear. But what then?—the one was made for sacrifice, the other for exaltation and enjoyment.

I should like to have said what I *could* have said when I had to make my speech yesterday. But what can a man do who is done to death by bridesmaids—who has been hustled by whispers and smiles out of the circle which Love and Youth mark round them on such occasions? I believe my little girl would willingly have come out to me, but, somehow, dare not; nor did I, somehow, dare to break in upon her. It was as well so, after all, perhaps: and as well that I did not make the speech I might have made. Speech! I wonder it was not a string of nursery-rhymes; for I thought of a good many as I glanced down on the pretty blushing creature pretending to eat chicken at my side. She looked so much like a child again! "Pussy cat, pussy cat with a white foot, When is your wedding, that I may come to't?" This was one of the rhymes. When is her wedding? Obviously now; and the time is come for me to give thanks therefor. I do so. I tell my audience that I speak with unmingled feelings, and I look happy. There is quite a radiance above me as I bid

the young people run off with each other, and take my love with them all the way.

They are gone—that is certain; and already I have begun to fall in love with another glass of wine after dinner. That is significant of much which is unsuspected by joyful brides and bridegrooms. Eagerly they start on the new stage of life, nor reflect that papa at home begins another, too, and that his *last*.

On either side of a hill lies a cradle and a grave. The ascending eastern slope, which is trodden by childhood and youth, is gentle and long; it is ever bright with the morning sun; the vines and the flowers are all there, and woods of dreamy rest, and nooks where nymph-like fancies bathe, and where thought is surprised. Higher as we ascend, the balmy mists through which we passed below roll away, the sunshine glows, the vines ripen—it is happiness to see and breathe alone. To look back, all is beauty—upward: all is hope, and as yet there is no hurry. We may dream in the woods when we will, slumber in every fancy-haunted nook, bathe in every stream where thought reposes.

The hill is climbed, and we stand on the borders of a wide table-land—men and women. Here, if flowers are fewer, fruits are more abundant, and the fiercer sun that ripens them gives us strength and ripeness too. And the eastern slope is still in view—it is possible to steal back to it after the labours of the day, and cool the heats of passion in its innocence and peace. The farther we go, the harder it is to do that; but if you have a little daughter, you must perforce turn your face often to the ascent up which she has to come also, and share its beauty still, if not its surprises. But by the time she has come to the brow of the hill, the hitherward slope is hidden from you: the waning afternoon finds you growing weary at the farther edge of the broad level where the work of the world is done. The descent is at hand. The western slope, gray, sudden, barren and more barren as it dips into the valley, must be entered too; and one day you feel that it is begun. That time for me is to-day. My dear little maid kept me on the sunny table-land till now (had I not to watch over her there?); but she has chosen another companion from among the young men around her: I go on alone. My back is turned to the hill, my feet rustle in autumnal leaves, a cool wind blows up from the valley: to-night I must gather a few sticks, I think.

This is what my young bride, and my young bridegroom, and the whole bevy of bridespeople, never gave a thought to. And after all, why should they? I have had my day; and now that the evening is come, I'll do as I have said: I'll even light a faggot of old memories to keep me in good cheer.



## The Prisoner of Spezzia.

---

THANK God for Spezzia's prison gloom !  
 This dim world, as it onward rolls,  
 Needeth the light of martyr-souls,  
 Clear shining in their hour of doom.

The hurry of our daily life,  
 The battle for our daily bread,  
 The struggles of the heart and head,  
 Both often wounded in the strife ;

The selfishness of little aims,  
 The mean things of our fear and hope  
 (As if our being's horoscope  
 Ended with this life's lower claims) ;

The petty cares of weary years,  
 The selfish pleasures that beset,  
 Till scarce our souls a glimpse can get  
 Of nobler hopes—sublimier fears ;—

These are the things that downward press,  
 That almost close our heavy eyes  
 To the great truth that sacrifice  
 Is the sure road to blessedness.

Therefore, when martyr-spirits rise,  
 And shed on us their calm, strong light,  
 Our souls grow stronger at the sight,  
 And with a start of glad surprise,

We—for the time at least—are great ;  
 Heroic thoughts our bosoms fill,  
 We feel a sympathetic thrill,  
 And almost envy them their fate.

Thus shining in his prison-night,  
 The Star of Italy displays  
 Unconsciously its lustrous rays,  
 In quiet majesty and might.

Sore wounded by Italian hands,  
His ardent wishes all betrayed,  
A prisoner of the king he made,—  
Grandest in adverse hour he stands.

No laurel crowns, no victor flowers,  
No acclamations rend the air,  
But failure that suggests despair,  
While treason's charge above him lowers.

And yet more grandly Hero now  
Than e'er the sword hath made or can,  
We own the kingship of the MAN,  
And to his royal nature bow.

Courageous patience, calmest strength,  
A passionate, deep tenderness,  
And truth, devotion, faith, are his,  
And these shall overcome at length.

Fear not! for Truth doth still abide;  
Her sword is heavenly and unseen,  
And aye her victor hour hath been,  
When men have deemed her crucified.

E. B. P.

*October 3rd, 1862.*

## The Story of Elizabeth.

### PART IV.

AND so she had left all behind, Elizabeth thought. Paris, the old house, mother, stepfather, and pasteur, the courtyard, the familiar wearisome life, the dull days breaking one by one, John Dampier, her hopeless hopes, and her foolish fancies—she had left them all on the other side of the sea for a time, and come away with kind Miss Dampier.

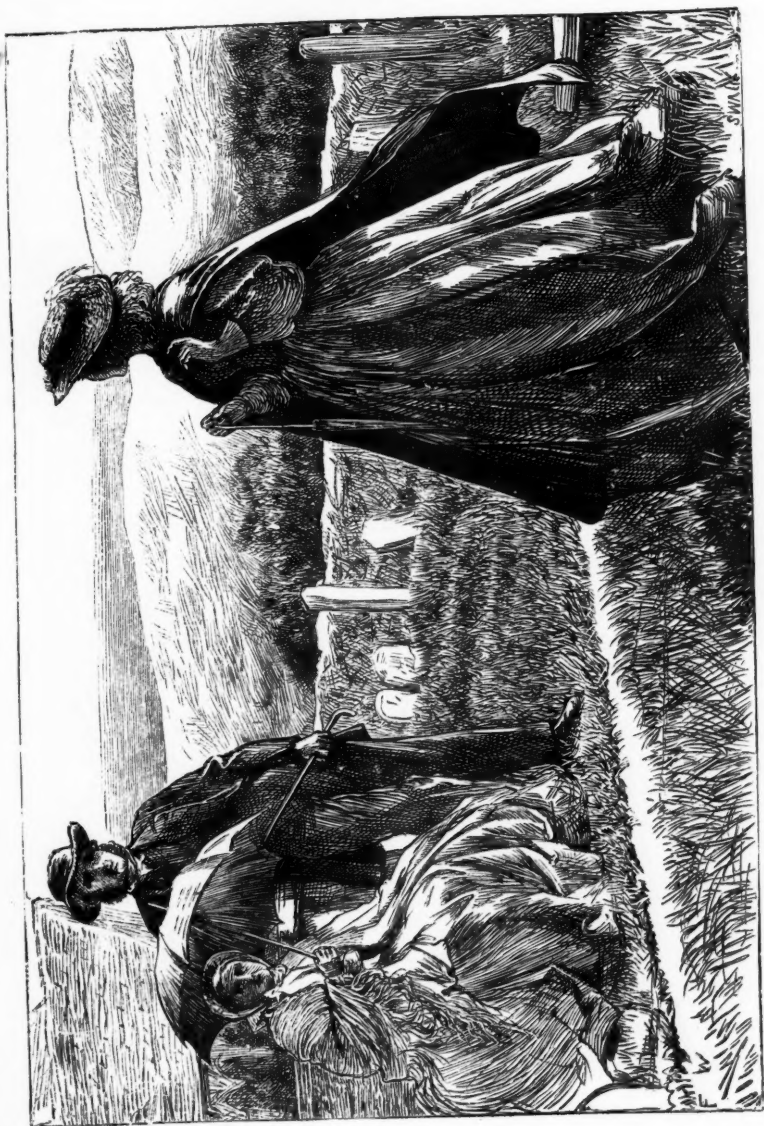
Here, in England, whither her good friend had brought her to get well, the air is damp with sea breezes; the atmosphere is not keen and exciting as it is abroad, the sky is more often gray than blue; it rarely dazzles and bewilders you with its brilliance; there is humidity and vegetation, a certain placidity, and denseness, and moisture of which some people complain. To Elizabeth—nervous, eager, excitable—this quiet green country, these autumn mists were new life. Day by day she gained strength, and flesh, and tone, and health, and good spirits.

But it was only by slow degrees that this good change was effected; weaknesses, faintnesses, relapses,—who does not know the wearisome course of a long convalescence.

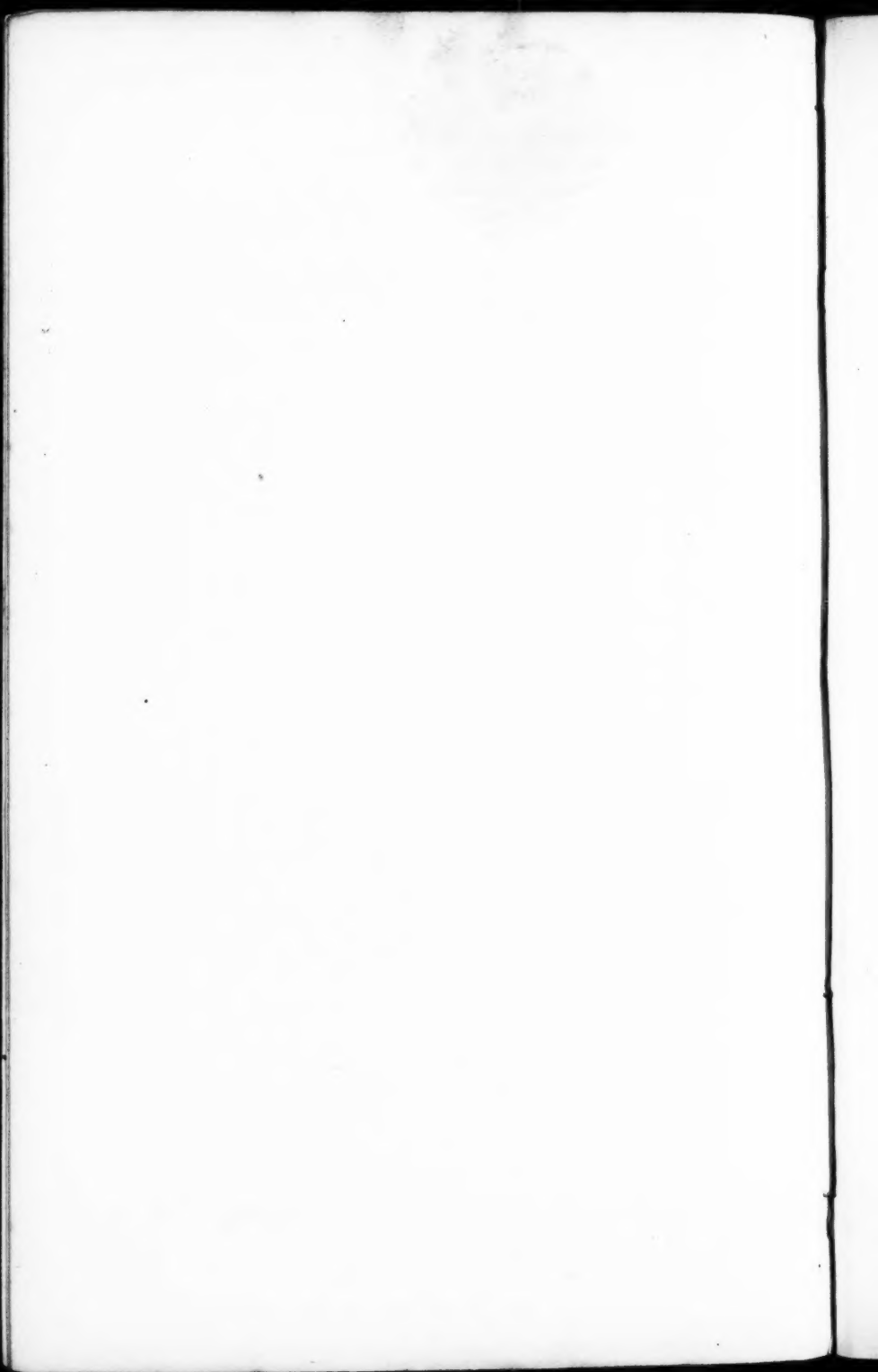
To-night, though she is by way of being a strong woman again, she feels as if she was a very, very old one, somehow, as she sits at the window of a great hotel looking out at the sunset. It seems to her as if it was never to rise again. There it goes sinking, glorying over the sea, blazing yellow in the west. The place grows dark; in the next room through the open door her white bed gleams chilly; she shudders as she looks at it, and thinks of the death-bed from which she has scarce risen. There are hours, especially when people are still weak and exhausted by sickness, when life seems unbearable, when death appears terrible, and when the spirit is so weary that it seems as if no sleep could be deep enough to give it rest. "When I am dead," thought Elizabeth; "ah me! my body will be at rest, but I myself, shall I have forgotten—do I want to forget —"

Meanwhile Miss Dampier, wrapped in her gray cloak, is taking a brisk solitary little walk upon the wooden pier which Elly sees reflected black against the sea. Aunt Jean is serenely happy about her charge; delighted to have carried her off against all opposition; determined that somehow or other she shall never go back; that she shall be made happy one day.

It is late in the autumn. Tourists are flocking home; a little procession of battered ladies and gentlemen carrying all sorts of bundles, and bags, and



On the Top of the Hill.



parcels, disembarks every day; and then another procession of ladies and gentlemen goes to see them land. Any moment you may chance to encounter some wan sea-sick friend staggering along with the rest of the sufferers, who are more or less other peoples' friends. The waves wash up and down, painted yellow by the sunset. There is no wind, but it has been blowing hard for a day or two, and the sea is not yet calm. How pleasant it is, Miss Dampier thinks; chill, fresh, wholesome. This good air is the very thing for Elly. Along the cliffs the old lady can see the people walking against the sky like little specks. There are plenty of fishing-boats out and about. There is the west still blazing yellow, and then a long gray bank of clouds; and with a hiss and a shrill clamour here comes the tossing, dark-shadowed steamer across the black and golden water. All the passengers are crowding on deck and feebly gathering their belongings together; here the *Frederick William* comes close alongside, and as everybody else rushes along the pier to inspect the new comers, good old Jean trots off too to see what is what. In a few minutes the passengers appear, slowly rising through a trap like the ghost in the *Corsican Brothers*.

First, a lilac gentleman, then a mouldy green gentleman (evidently a foreigner), then an orange lady.

Then a ghostly blue gentleman, then a deadly white lady, then a pale lemon-coloured gentleman, with a red nose.

Then a stout lady, black in the face, then a faltering lady's-maid, with a band-box.

Then a gentleman with an umbrella.

Jean Dampier is in luck to-night, as, indeed, she deserves to be: a more kindly, tender-hearted, unselfish old woman does not exist—if that is a reason for being lucky—however, she has been my good friend for many a long year, and it is not to-day that I am going to begin to pay her compliments.

I was saying she is in luck, and she finds a nephew among the passengers—it is the gentleman with the umbrella; and there they are greeting one another in the most affectionate manner.

*The Nephew*.—"Let me get my portmanteau, and then I will come and talk to you as much as you like."

*The Aunt*.—"Never mind your portmanteau, the porter will look after it. Where have you been, Will? Where do you come from? I am at the 'Flag Hotel,' close by."

*The Nephew*.—"So I hear."

*The Aunt*.—"Who told you that."

*The Nephew*.—"A sour-faced woman at Paris. I asked for you at Meurice's, and they sent me to this Madame Turneur. She told me all about you. What business is it of yours to go about nursing mad girls."

*Aunt Jean*.—"Elly is not mad. You have heard me talk of her a hundred times. I do believe I saved her life, Will; it was my business, if anybody's, to care for her. Her heart was nearly broken."

*The Nephew.*—"John nearly broke her heart, did he? I don't believe a word of it" (*smiling very sweetly*). "You are always running away with one idea after another, you silly old woman. Young ladies' hearts are made of india-rubber, and Lady Dampier says this one is an artful—designing—horrible—abominable——"

*Aunt Jean (sadly).*—"Elly nearly died, that is all. You are like all men, Will——"

*The Nephew (interrupting).*—"Don't! Consider, I'm just out of the hands of the steward. Let me have something to eat before we enter into any sentimental discussion. Here (*to a porter*), bring my portmanteau to the hotel.—Nonsense (*to a flyman*), what should I do with your carriage?"

Will Dampier was a member of the Alpine Club, and went year by year to scramble his holiday away up and down mountain sides. He was a clergyman, comfortably installed in a family living. He was something like his cousin in appearance, but, to my mind, better looking, browner, broader, with bright blue eyes and a charming smile. He looked like a gentleman. He wore a clerical waistcoat. He had been very much complimented upon his good sense; and he liked giving advice, and took pains about it, as he was anxious not to lose his reputation. Now and then, however, he did foolish things, but he did them sensibly, which is a very different thing from doing sensible things foolishly. It seems to me that is just the difference between men and women.

Will was Miss Dampier's ideal of what a nephew should be. They walked back to the hotel together, chattering away very comfortably. He went into the coffee-room and ordered his dinner, and then he came back to his aunt who was walking on the lawn outside. Meanwhile the sun went on setting, the windows lighted up one by one. It was that comfortable hour when people sit down in little friendly groups and break bread, and take their ease, the business of the day being over. Will Dampier and his aunt took one or two turns along the gravel path facing the sea; he had twenty minutes to wait, and he thought they might be well employed in giving good counsel.

"It seems to me a very wild scheme of yours, carrying off this unruly young woman," he began; "she will have to go home sooner or later. What good will you have done?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," says Miss Dampier, meekly; "a holiday is good for us at all times. Haven't you enjoyed yours, Will?"

"I should rather think I had. You never saw anything so pretty as Berne the other morning as I was coming away. I came home by the Rhine, you know. I saw aunt Dampier and Tishy for an hour or two."

"And did you see John at Paris?"

"No; he was down at V——, staying with the M——'s. And now tell me about the young lady with the heart. Is she upstairs tearing her hair?" Aunt Dampier was furious.

"So she had heard of it?" said Miss Dampier, thoughtfully. And then she added rather sharply, "You can tell her that the young lady is quite



getting over her fancy. In fact, John doesn't deserve that she should remember him. Now listen, Will, I am going to tell you a story." And then, in her quiet, pleasant, old-fashioned way, she told him her version of all that had been happening.

Will listened and laughed, and said, "You will think me a brute, but I agree with aunt Dampier. Your young woman has behaved as badly as possible; she has made a dead set at poor John, who is so vain that any woman can get him into her clutches."

"What do you mean?" cries the aunt, quite angry.

"If she had really cared for him, would she have forgotten all about him already? I warn you, aunt Jenny; I don't approve of your heroine."

"I must go and look after my heroine," says Miss Dampier, drily. "I dare say your dinner is ready."

But Will Dampier, whose curiosity at all events was excited, followed his aunt upstairs and along the passage, and went in after her as she opened a door; went into a dim chill room, with two wide-set windows, through which the last yellow streaks of the sunset were fading, and the fresh evening blast blew in with a gust as they entered. It was dark, and nothing could be seen distinctly, only something white seemed crouching in a chair, and as the door opened they heard a low sobbing sigh, which seemed to come out of the gloom; and then it was all very silent.

"Elly, my dear child," said Miss Dampier, "what is the matter?"

There was no answer.

"Why don't you speak?" said the kind old lady, groping about, and running up against chairs and tables.

"Because I can't speak without crying," gasps Elly, beginning to cry. "And it's so ungrateful——"

"You are tired, dear," says aunt Jean, "and cold"—taking her hand; and then turning round and seeing that her nephew had come in with her, she said, "Ring the bell, Will, and go to your dinner. If you will tell them downstairs to send up some tea directly I shall be obliged to you." William Dampier did as he was bid, and walked away considerably mollified towards poor Elly. "One is so apt to find fault with people," he was thinking. "And there she was crying upstairs all the time, poor wretch."

He could never bear to see a woman cry. His parishioners—the women, I mean—had found this out, and used to shed a great many tears when he came to see them. He had found them out—he knew that they had found him out, and yet as sure as the apron-corner went up, the half-crown came out of the pocket.

9.30.—*Reading Room, Flag Hotel, Boatstown.*—Mr. William Dampier writing at a side-table to a married sister in India. Three old gentlemen come creaking in; select limp newspapers, and take their places. A young man who is going to town by the 10.30 train lies down on the sofa and falls asleep, and snores gently. A soothing silence. Mr. Dampier's blunt pen travels along the thin paper. . . . "What a dear

old woman aunt Jenny is. How well she tells a story. Lady Dampier was telling me the same story the other day. I was very much bored. I thought each one person more selfish and disagreeable than the other. Now aunt Jenny takes up the tale. The personages all brighten under her friendly old spectacles, and become good, gentle-hearted, romantic, and heroic all at once—as she is herself. I was a good deal struck by her report of poor John's sentimental imbroglío. I drank tea with the imbroglío this evening, and I can't help rather liking her. She has a sweet pretty face, and her voice, when she talks, pipes and thrills like a musical snuff-box. Aunt Jenny wants her for a niece, that is certain, and says that a man ought to marry the wife he likes best. You are sure to agree to that; I wonder what Miles says. But she's torn with sympathy, poor old dear, and first cries over one girl, and then over the other. She says John came to her one day at Paris in a great state of mind, declared he was quite determined to finish with all his uncertainty, and that he had made up his mind to break with Lætitia, and to marry Elizabeth, if she was still in her old way of thinking. Aunt Jean got frightened, refused to interfere, carried off the young lady, and has not spoken to her on the subject. John, who is really behaving very foolishly, is still at Paris, and has not followed them, as I know my aunt hoped he would have done. I can't help being very sorry for him. Lady Dampier has heard of his goings on. A Frenchman told some people, who told some people who—— you know how things get about. Some day when I don't wish it, you will hear all about me, and write me a thundering letter all the way from Lucknow. There is no doubt about the matter. It would be a thousand pities if John were to break off with Lætitia, to speak nothing of the cruelty and the insult to the poor child, who is, I believe, sincerely attached to him.

“This Miss Gilmour certainly made a dead set at him, and we all know that poor John is not the man to resist any attack upon his vanity. Tishy knows nothing of all this, and to tell the truth did not object to a little quiet flirtation in her intended's absence. She is just as nice as ever, silent, unaffected, simple, gentle; perhaps it is a shame to say that she seems to want a little heart and tenderness.

“And so Rosey and Posey are coming home. I am right sorry for their poor papa and mamma. I hope you have sometimes talked to my nieces about their respectable uncle Will. They are sure to be looked after and happy with aunt Jenny, but how you will be breaking your hearts after them! Miles is safe to be ordered home in a year or two, and that is a great consolation. A priest ought perhaps to talk to you of one other consolation more certain and more efficacious. But I have always found my dear Prue a better Christian than myself, and I have no need to preach to her.”

Will Dampier wrote a close straight little handwriting; only one side of his paper was full, but he did not care to write any more that night: he put up his letter in his case, and walked out into the garden.

It was a great starlight night. The sea gloomed vast and black on the horizon. A few other people were walking in the garden, and they talked in hushed yet distinct voices. Many of the windows were open and alight. Will looked up at the window of the room where he had been to see his aunt. That was alight and open, too, and some one was sitting with clasped hands, looking at the sky. Dampier lit a cigar, and he, too, walked along gazing at the stars, and thinking of Prue's kind face as he went along. Other constellations clustered above her head, he thought; between them lay miles of land and sea, great countries, oceans rushing, plains arid and unknown; vast jungles, deserted cities, crumbling in a broiling sun; it gave him a little vertigo to try and realize what hundreds of miles of distance stretched between their two beating hearts. Distance so great, and yet so little; for he could love his sister, and think of her, and see her, and talk to her, as if she was in the next room. What was that distance which could be measured by miles, compared to the immeasurable gulf that separates each one of us from the nearest and dearest whose hands we may hold in our own?

Will walked on, his mind full of dim thoughts, such as come to most people on starlit nights; when constellations are blazing, and the living soul gazes with awe-stricken wonder at the great living universe, in the midst of which it waits, and trembles, and adores. "The world all about has faded away," he thought, "and lies dark and dim, and indistinct. People are lying like dead people stretched out, unconscious on their beds, heedless, unknowing. Here and there in the houses, a few dead people are lying like the sleepers. Are they as unconscious as the living?" He goes to the end of the garden, and stands looking upward, until he cannot think longer of things so far above him. It seems to him that his brain is like the string of an instrument, which will break under the passionate vibration of harmonies so far beyond his powers to render. He goes back into the house. Everything suddenly grows strangely real and familiar, and yet it seemed, but a moment ago, as if to-day and its cares had passed away for ever.

Elly had a little Indian box that her father had once given to her. It served her for a work-box and a treasure casket. She kept her scissors in it and her ruby ring; some lavender, a gold thimble, and her father's picture. And then in a lower tray were some cottons and tapes, one or two letters, a pencil, and a broken silver chain. She had a childish habit of playing with it still, sometimes, and setting it to rights. It was lying on the breakfast-table next morning when Will Dampier came in to see his aunt. Miss Dampier, who liked order, begged Elly to take it off, and Dampier politely, to save her the trouble, set it down somewhere else, and then came to the table and asked for some tea. The fishes had had no luck that morning, he told them; he had been out in a boat since seven o'clock, and brought back a basketful. The sea air made them hungry, no doubt, for they came by dozens—little feeble whiting—and nibbled at the bait. "I wish you would come," he said to his aunt;

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"the boat bobs up and down in the sunshine, and the breeze is delightfully fresh, and the people come down on the beech and stare at you through telescopes." As he talked to his aunt he glanced at Elly, who was pouring out his tea; he said to himself that she was certainly an uncommonly pretty girl; and then he began to speculate about an odd soft look in her eyes. "When I see people with that expression," he wrote to his sister, "I always ask myself what it means? I have seen it in the glass, sometimes, when I have been shaving. Miss Gilmour was not looking at me, but at the muffins and tea-cups. She was nicely dressed in blue calico; she was smiling; her hair trim and shiny. I could hardly believe it was my wailing banshee of the previous night." (What follows is to the purpose, so I may as well transcribe a little more of Will's letter.) "When she had poured out my tea, she took up her hat and said she should go down to the station, and get *The Times* for my aunt. I should have offered my services, but aunt Jean made me a sign to stay. What for, do you think? To show me a letter she had received in the morning from that absurd John, who cannot make up his mind. Here it is before me. I will send you a piece of the rodomontade: 'Have you sounded her as to the state of her feelings?' he writes. 'I do not wish to talk her into a partiality for me, but if she is still unhappy, if she still cares for me, I am determined to come after you, and to ask her to be my wife. I do not, as I tell you, want to talk poor Elly into a *grande passion*. But if her feelings are unchanged, I will marry her to-morrow, if she chooses; and I daresay she will not break her heart. Perhaps you will all think me a fool for my pains; but I shall not be alone in the world. What was poor little Elly herself when she cried for the moon?'

"Aunt Jean said very sensibly that she was very much puzzled, that she could not quite understand what was going on in his mind; it seemed to her after all that he was not really in love with anybody, but that he sincerely wished to do what was right.

"I cannot be so charitable as she is, I said (as I wrote to you last night); I thought he was behaving very strangely. I was very sorry for him, but there was no doubt as to whom he ought to marry. He was bound in honour by every possible promise to Tishy, whereas he was not in the least bound to Miss Gilmour; he was not even desperately in love with her. She had accepted her position—it was hard upon her, but it would be ten thousand times harder for Lætitia.

"'And yet, won't it be hard for Lætitia,' says my aunt, 'if he marries her, liking Elizabeth best?'

"There was truth in that. 'He mustn't like her best,' said I. 'Miss Gilmour will get over her fancy for him, and he must get over his for her. If he had only behaved like a man and married her right off two years ago, and never hankered after the flesh-pots of Egypt, or if he had only left her alone to settle down with her French pasteur——'

"'If—if,' said my aunt, impatiently—you know her way—he has

done wrong and been sorry for it, Will, which of us can do more? I doubt whether you would have behaved a bit better in his place.'

"I daresay not; but that had nothing to do with the question, and I begged her to write to John and tell him why she had not showed Miss Gilmour his note—my advice was not good, but it seemed to me the best under the circumstances. They were not good either."

This bit of Mr. Will's letter was written at his aunt's writing-book immediately after their little talk. Elly came in rosy from her walk, and Will went on diligently, looking up every now and then with the sense of *bien-être* which a bachelor experiences when he suddenly finds himself domesticated and at home with kind women.

Miss Dampier was sitting in the window. She had got *The Times* in her hand and was trying to read. Every now and then she looked up at her nephew with his curly head bent over his writing, at Elly leaning lazily back in her chair, sewing idly at a little shred of work. Her hair was clipped, the colour had faded out of her cheeks, her eyes gleamed. Pretty as she was, still she was changed—how changed from the Elizabeth of eighteen months ago whom Miss Dampier could remember! The old lady went on with her paper, trying to read. She turned to the French correspondent, and saw something about the Chamber, the Emperor, about Italy; about M. X—the rich banker, having resolved to terminate his existence, when fortunately his servant enters the room at the precise moment when he was preparing to precipitate himself . . . . "The servant to precipitate . . . . the window . . . . the . . . . poor Tishy! At my age I did think I should have done with sentimental troubles. Heigho! he likes Elly best, I do believe, and perhaps Elly cares most for him. I vow it is a good thing to be old and to be in love with one's dinner and one's arm-chair. I can keep to them both in all honour. But this poor nephew Jack will have to give up one bundle of hay, and I am an old donkey myself to fash so much about it."

Elly wanted some thread, and rose with a soft rustle and got her box and came back to her easy-chair. Out of the window they could see all the pleasant idle business of the little sea-port going on, the people strolling in the garden, or sitting in all sorts of queer corners, the boats, the mariners (I do believe they are hired to stand about in blue shirts and shake their battered old noses as they prose for hours together.) The waiter came and took away the breakfast, William went on with his letter, and Miss Dampier, with John's little note in her pocket, was, as I say, reading the most extraordinary things in *The Times* all about her own private concerns. Nobody spoke for some ten minutes, when suddenly came a little gasp, a little sigh from Elly's low chair, and the girl said "Aunt Jean! look here," almost crying, and held out something in her thin hand.

"What is it, my dear?" said Miss Dampier, looking up hastily and pulling off her spectacles; they were dim somehow and wanted wiping.



"Poor dear, dearest Tishy," cried Elly in her odd impetuous way. "Why does he not go to her? Aunt Jean, look here, I found it in my box—only look here," and she put a little note into Miss Dampier's hand.

Will looked up curiously from his writing. Elly had forgotten all about him. Miss Dampier took the letter, and when she had read what was written, and then turned over the page, she took off her glasses again with a click and said, "What nonsense!"

And so it was nonsense, and yet the nonsense touched Elizabeth and brought tears into her eyes. They came faster and faster, and then suddenly remembering that she was not alone, and ashamed that Dampier should see her cry again, she jumped up with a shining blushing tear-dimmed tender face, and ran away out of the room. Aunt Jean looked at Will doubtfully, then hesitated, and gave him the little shabby letter that had brought these bright tears into the girl's eyes. Dear old soul, she made a sort of confessor of her nephew.

The confessor saw a few foolish words which Lætitia must have written days ago, never thinking that her poor little words were to be scanned by stranger eyes—written perhaps unconsciously on a stray sheet of paper. There was, "John. Dear John! Dear, dearest! I am so hap. . . . John and Lætitia. John my jo. Goose and gander." And then, by some odd chance, she must have folded the blotted sheet together and forgotten what she had written, and sent it off to Elly Gilmour with a little careless note about Schlangenbad, and "more fortunate next time," on the other side.

"Poor little Letty! And I who called her indifferent and cold-hearted! What fools we are at times—at all times, I mean," thought Dampier, as he doubled it up and put it back into the lavender-box.

"All the same, Elly ought to know that he would marry her if she wishes it," said Miss Dampier, going back to the charge.

"There is always time enough to tell her so, said Dampier, thoughtfully. "When you have heard from John again——"

As he spoke the door opened and Miss Gilmour came back into the room. She had dried her eyes, she had fastened on her grey shawl. She picked up her hat, which was lying on the floor, and began pulling on two very formidable-looking gauntlets over her slim white hands. "I am going for a little walk," she said, to Miss Dampier. "Will you"—hesitating and blushing—"direct that little note of Lætitia's to Sir John? I am going along the cliff towards that pretty little bay."

Will was quite melted and touched. Was this the scheming young woman against whom he had been warned? the woman who had entangled his cousin with her wiles? Here was one of the foolish unexpected things he sometimes did. After making up his mind and talking everybody over to his own way of thinking, he undoes it all by a single stroke.

"Aunt Jenny," he says, "are you going to tell her why John Dampier does not go to Lætitia?"

"Why does he not go?" Elly repeats, losing her colour a little.

"He says that if you would like him to stay, he thinks he ought not to go," says Jean Dampier, hesitating, and tearing corners off *The Times* newspaper.

Will Dampier turned his broad back and looked out of window. There was a moment's silence. They could hear the tinkling of bells, the whistling of the sea, the voices of the men calling to each other in the port: the sunshine streamed in: Elly was standing in it, and seemed gilt with a golden background. She ought to have held a palm in her hand, poor little martyr!

It seemed a long time, it was only a minute, and then she spoke; a sweet honest blush came deepening into Elizabeth's pale cheeks: "I don't want to marry him because I care for him," she said, in a thrilling pathetic voice. "Why should Lætitia, who is so fond of him, suffer because I behaved so badly?" The tears once more came welling up into her eyes. "I shall think I ought to have died instead of getting well," she said. "Aunt Jean, send him the little note; make him go, dear aunt Jean."

Miss Dampier gave Elly a kiss; she did not know what to say; she could not influence her one way or another.

She wrote to John that morning, taking good care to look at the back of her paper first.

*Flag Hotel, Boatstown, Nov. 15th.*

MY DEAR JACK, — I had great doubts about communicating your letter to Elizabeth. It seemed to me that the path you had determined upon was one full of thorns and difficulties, for her, for you, and for my niece Lætitia. But although Elly is of far too affectionate a nature ever to give up caring for any of her friends, let me assure you that her feelings are now only those of friendly regard and deep interest in your welfare. When I mentioned to her the contents of your letter (I think it best to speak plainly), she said, with her eyes full of tears, that she did not want to marry you—that she felt you were bound to return to Lætitia. She had been much affected by discovering the enclosed little note from your cousin. I must say that the part which concerns you interested me much, more so than her letter to her old friend. But she was evidently preoccupied at the time, and Elly, far from feeling neglected, actually began to cry, she was so touched by this somewhat singular discovery. Girls' tears are easily dried. If it lies in my power she shall yet be made happy.

There is nothing now, as you see, that need prevent your fulfilling your engagements. You are all very good children, on the whole, and I trust that your troubles are but fleeting clouds that will soon pass away. That you and Lætitia may enjoy all prosperity is the sincere hope and desire of your

Affectionate old aunt,

J. M. DAMPIER.

Miss Dampier having determined that she had written a perfectly impartial letter, put it up in an envelope, rang the bell, and desired a waiter to post it.

Number twenty-three's bell rang at the same moment; so did number fifteen; immediately after a quantity of people poured in by the eleven o'clock train; the waiter flung the letter down on his pantry table, and rushed off to attend to half-a-dozen things at once, of which posting the note was not one.

About three o'clock that afternoon Miss Dampier in her close bonnet was standing in the passage talking to a tall young man with a black waistcoat and wide-awake.

"What are you going to do?" he said. "Couldn't we go for a drive somewhere?"

"I have ordered a carriage at three," said Miss Dampier, smiling. "We are going up on the hills. You might come, too, if you liked it." And when the carriage drove up to the door there he was, waiting to hand her in.

He had always, until he saw her, imagined Elly a little flirting person, quite different from the tall young lady in the broad hat, with the long cloak falling from her shoulders, who was prepared to accompany them. She had gone away a little, and his aunt sent him to fetch her. She was standing against the railing, looking out at the sea with her sad eyes. There was the lawn, there was the sea, there was Elly. A pretty young lady always makes a pretty picture; but out of doors in the sunshine she looks a prettier young lady than anywhere else, thought Mr. Will, as Elizabeth walked across the grass. He was not alone in his opinion; more than one person looked up as she passed. He began to think that far from doing a foolish thing his aunt had shown her usual good sense in taking such good care of this sad, charming, beautiful young woman. It was no use trying to think ill of her. With such a face as hers she has a right to fall in love with anybody she pleases, he thought; and so, as they were walking towards the carriage, Will Dampier, thinking that this was a good opportunity for a little confidential communication, said, somewhat in his professional manner, "You seem out of spirits, Miss Gilmour. I hope that you do not regret your decision of this morning."

"Yes, I do regret it," said poor Elly, and two great tears came dribbling down her cheeks. "Do you think that when a girl gives up what she likes best in the world she is not sorry? I am horribly sorry."

Will was very much puzzled how to answer this unexpected confidence. He said, looking rather foolish, "One is so apt to ask unnecessary questions. But, take my word for it, you have done quite right, and some day you will be more glad than you are now."

I must confess that my heroine here got exceedingly cross.

"Ah, that is what people say who do not know of what they are talking. What business of yours is my poor unlucky bruised and broken fancy?" she said. "Ah! Why were you ever told? What am I? What is it to you?"

All the way she sat silent and dull, staring out at the landscape as they went along; suffering, in truth, poor child, more than either of her companions could tell: saying good-by to the dearest hope of her youth, tearing herself away from the familiar and the well-loved dreams. Dreams do I say? They had been the Realities to her, poor child, for many a day. And the realities had seemed to be the dreams.

They drove along a straight road, and came at last to some delightful

fresh downs, with the sea sparkling in the distance, and a sort of autumnal glow on the hills all about. The breeze came in fresh gusts, the carriage jogged on, still up hill, and Will Dampier walked alongside, well pleased with the entertainment, and making endless jokes at his aunt. She rather liked being laughed at; but Elly never looked up once, or heeded what they said. They were going towards a brown church, that was standing on the top of a hill. It must have been built by the Danes a thousand years ago. There it stood, looking out at the sea, brown, grim solitary, with its grave-yard on the hillside. Trees were clustering down in a valley below; but here, up above, it was all bleak, bare, and solitary, only tinted and painted by the brown and purple sunshine.

They stopped the carriage a little way off, and got out and passed through a gate, and walked up the hill top. Elly went first, Will followed, and Miss Dampier came slowly after. As Elly reached the top of the hill she turned round, and stood against the landscape, like a picture with a background, and looked back and said—

“Do you hear?”

The organ inside the church was playing a chaunt, and presently some voices began chaunting to the playing of the organ. Elly went across the grave-yard, and leant against the porch, listening. Five minutes went by; her anger was melting away. It was exquisitely clear, peaceful, and tranquil here, up on this hill where the dead people were lying among the grass and daisies. All the bitterness went away out of her heart, somehow, in the golden glow. She said to herself that she felt now, suddenly, for the first time, as if she could bury her fancy and leave it behind her in this quiet place. As the chaunt went on, her whole heart uttered in harmony with it, though her lips were silent. She did not say to herself, what a small thing it was that had troubled her: what vast combinations were here to make her happy; hills, vales, light, with its wondrous refractions, harmony, colour; the great ocean, the great world, rolling on amid the greater worlds beyond!

But she felt it somehow. The voices ceased, and all was very silent.

“Oh, give thanks,” the Psalm began again; and Elly felt that she could indeed give thanks for mercies that were more than she had ever deserved. When she was at home with her mother she thought—just now the thought of returning there scarce gave her a pang—she should remember to-day all the good hopes, good prayers, and aspirations which had come to her in this peaceful grave-yard up among the hills. She had been selfish, discontented, and ungrateful all her life, angry and chafed but an hour ago, and here was peace, hers for the moment, here was tranquil happiness. The mad, rash delight she had felt when she had been with John Dampier was nothing compared to this great natural peace and calm. A sort of veil seemed lifted from her eyes, and she felt, for the first time, that she could be happy though what she had wished for most was never to be hers—that there was other happiness than that which she had once fancied part of life itself. Did she ever regret the decision she had

made? Did she ever see occasion to think differently from this? If, in after times, she may have felt a little sad, a little lonely now and then, if she may have thought with a moment's regret of those days that were now already past and over for ever, still she knew she had done rightly when she determined to bury the past, with all kindness, with reverent hands. Somehow, in some strange and mysterious manner, the bitterness of her silly troubles had left her—left her a better girl than she had been ever before. She was more good, more happy, more old, more wise, now, and, in truth, there was kindness in store for her, there were suns yet to shine, friendly words to be spoken, troubles yet to be endured, other than those sentimental griefs which had racked her youth so fiercely.

While they were all on the hill top the steamer came into the port earlier than on the day when Will Dampier arrived. One of the passengers walked up to the hotel and desired a waiter to show him to Miss Dampier's room. It was empty, of course; chairs pushed about, windows open, work and books on the table. The paper was lying on the floor—the passenger noticed that a corner had been torn off; a little box was open on the table, a ruby ring glittering in the tray. "How careless," he thought, and then went and flung himself into a great arm-chair.

So! she had been here a minute ago. There was a glove lying on a chair; there were writing materials on a side-table—a blotting-book open, pens with the ink scarcely dry; and in this room, in this place, he was going to decide his fate—rightly or wrongly he could not tell. Lætitia is a cold-blooded little creature, he kept saying to himself: this girl, with all her faults, with all her impulses, has a heart to break or to mend. My mother will learn too late that I cannot submit to such dictation. By Jove, what a letter it is! He pulled it out of his pocket, read it once more, and crumpled it up and threw it into the fire-place. It was certainly not a very wise composition—long, vicious, wiry tails and flourishes. "John, words cannot," &c. &c. "What Lady Tomsey," &c. &c. "How horror-struck Major Potterton," &c. &c.; and finally concluded with a command that he should instantly return to Schlangebad; or, failing this, an announcement that she should immediately join him, *wherever* he might be!

So Sir John, in a rage, packed up and came off to Boatstown—his mother can follow him or not, as she chooses; and here is walking up and down the room, while Elly, driving over the hills, is saying farewell, farewell, good-by to her old love for ever.

As Miss Dampier said, he could not have really cared for anybody; for, by some strange contradiction, now that the die is cast, now that after all these long doubts and mistrusts he had made up his mind, somehow new doubts arise. He wonders whether he and Elly will be happy together? He pictures stormy scenes; he intuitively shrinks from the idea of her unconventionalities, her eagerness, her enthusiasm. He is a man who likes a quiet life, who would appreciate a sober, happy home—a gentle, equable companion, to greet him quietly, to care for his tastes

and his ways, to sympathize, to befriend him. Whereas now it is he who will have to study his companion all the rest of his life; if he thwarts her she will fall ill of sorrow, if he satisfies her she will ask more and more, if he neglect her—being busy, or weary, or what not—she will die of grief, if he wants sympathy and common sense she will only adore him. Poor Elly! it is hard upon her that he should make such a bugbear of her poor little love. His courage is oozing out at his finger ends. He is in a rage with her, and with himself, and with his mother, and with his aunt. He and everybody else are in a league to behave as badly as possible. He will try and do his duty, he thinks, for all that, for my hero is an honest-hearted man though a weak one. It is not Lady Dampier's letter that shall influence him one way or another; if Elly is breaking her heart to have him, and if Letty doesn't care one way or the other, as is likely enough, well then he will marry Elizabeth, he cries with a stout desperation, and he dashes up and down the room in a fury.

And just at this minute the waiter comes in, and says Miss Dampier has gone out for a drive, and will not be back for some time. Mr. Dampier is staying in the house, but he has gone out with her, and who shall he say? And Sir John, looking up, gives his name and says he will wait.

Upon which the waiter suddenly remembers the letter he left in his pantry, and, feeling rather guilty, proposes to fetch it. And by this time Elly, and Will, and Miss Dampier have got into the carriage again and are driving homewards.

There was a certain humility about Elly, with all her ill-humours and varieties, which seemed to sweeten her whole nature. Will Dampier, who was rather angry with her for her peevishness, could not help forgiving her, when, as he helped her out of the carriage in the courtyard, she said,—

"I don't quite know how to say it—but I was very rude just now. I was very unhappy, and I hope you will forgive me," and she looked up. The light from the hills was still in her face.

"It was I who was rude," says Will, good-naturedly holding out his hand; and of course he forgave her.

The band was playing, the garden was full of people; but Aunt Jenny was cold, and glad to get home. The ladies went upstairs: Will remained down below, strolling up and down in the garden with the rest of the people; but at five o'clock the indefatigable bell began to ring once more; the afternoon boat was getting up its steam, and making its preparations to cross over to the other side.

Will met a friend of his, who was going over in it, and he walked down with him to see him off. He went on board with him, shook hands, and turned to come away. At that minute some one happened to look round, and Will, to his immense surprise, recognized his cousin. That was John; those were his mutton-chop whiskers; there was no doubt about it.

He sprang forward and called him by name, "John," he said, "you here?"

"Well!" said John, smiling a little, "why not me, as well as you? are you coming across?"

"Are you going across?" said Will, doubtfully,

"Yes," the other answered; "I came over on business; don't say anything of my having been here. Pray remember this. I have a particular reason."

"I shall say nothing," said Will. "I am glad you are going, John," he added, stupidly. "I think I know your reason—a very nice, pretty reason too."

"So those women have been telling you all about my private affairs," said Sir John, speaking quick, and looking very black.

"Your mother told me first," Will said. "I saw her the other day. For all sakes I am glad you are giving up all thoughts of Elly Gilmour."

"Are you?" said John, dryly. They waited for a minute in awkward silence, but as they were shaking hands and saying "Good-by," suddenly John melted, and said, "Look here, Will, I should like to see her once more. Could you manage this for me. I don't want her to know, you know; but could you bring her to the end of the pier. I am going back to Letty, as you see, so I don't think she need object."

Will nodded, and went up the ladder and turned towards the house without a word, walking quickly and hurrying along. The band in the garden burst out into a pretty melancholy dance tune. The sun went down peg by peg into the sea; the steamer still whistled and puffed as it got up its steam.

Elly was sitting alone. She had lighted a candle, and was writing home. Her hat was lying on a chair beside her. The music had set her dreaming; her thoughts were far away, in the dismal old home again, with Françoise, and Anthony, and the rest of them. She was beginning to live the new life she had been picturing to herself; trying to imagine herself good and contented in the hateful old home; it seemed almost endurable just at this minute, when suddenly the door burst open, and Will Dampier came in with his hat on.

"I want you to come out a little way with me," he said. "I want you to come and see the boat off. There's no time to lose."

"Thank you," said Elly, "but I'm busy."

"It won't take you five minutes," he said.

She laughed. "I am lazy, and rather tired."

Will could not give up. He persisted: he knew he had a knack of persuading his old women at home; he tried it on Miss Gilmour.

"I see you have not forgiven me," he said; "you won't trust yourself with me."

"Yes, indeed," said Elly; "I am only lazy."

The time was going. He looked at his watch; there were but five minutes—but five minutes for John to take leave of his love of many a year: but five minutes and it would be too late. He grew impatient.

"Pray, come," he said. "I shall look upon it as a sign that you have



forgiven me. Will you do me this favour—will you come? I assure you I shall not be ungrateful."

Elly thought it odd, and still hesitated; but it seemed unkind to refuse. She got up, fetched her hat and cloak, and in a minute he was hurrying her along across the lawn, along the side of the dock, out to the pier's end.

They were only just in time. "You are very mysterious," said Elly. "Why do you care so much to see the boat go out? How chilly it is. Are you not glad to be here on this side of the water? Ah! how soon it will be time for me to go back?"

Will did not answer, he was so busy watching the people moving about on board. Puff! puff! Cannot you imagine the great boat passing close at their feet, going out in the night into the open sea; the streaks of light in the west; Elly, with flushed, rosy-red cheeks, like the sunset, standing under the lighthouse, and talking in her gentle voice, and looking out, saying it would be fine to-morrow?

Can't you fancy poor Sir John leaning against a pile of baggage, smoking a cigar, and looking up wistfully. As he slid past he actually caught the tone of her voice. Like a drowning man who can see in one instant years of his past life flashing before him, Sir John saw Elly—a woman with lines of care in her face,—there, standing in the light of the lamp, with the red streams of sunset beyond, and the night closing in all round about; and then he saw her as he had seen her once—a happy, unconscious girl, brightening, smiling at his coming: and as the picture travelled on, a sad girl, meeting him in the street by chance—a desperate, almost broken-hearted woman, looking up greyly into his face in the theatre. Puff! puff!—it was all over, she was still smiling before his eyes. One last glimpse of the two, and they had disappeared. He slipped away right out of her existence, and she did not even guess that he had been near. She stood unwitting for an instant, watching the boat as it tossed out to sea, and then said, "Now we will go home." A sudden gloom and depression seemed to have come over her. She walked along quite silently, and did not seem to heed the presence of her companion.

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## How Prior Richard of Dunstable ruled his Monks and Tenants, and how he treated his Neighbours.

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THE great Roman road known in modern times by the name of the Watling Street, and another Roman road also traversing the island, and called the Ikenield Street, crossed, on a steep elevation, in the centre of an amphitheatre of chalk hills in the south of Bedfordshire, but close upon the borders of Hertfordshire. At the point of intersection, the Romans built a town, which they called Magiovinium, and its site and the land round it became afterwards a manor of the Anglo-Saxon kings, who appear to have had here a house named Kingsbury. But, at the commencement of the Norman period, this had apparently been abandoned as a residence, and the ruins of the Roman town were overgrown with trees and brushwood, which were the haunt of outlaws and robbers to such a degree that in the reign of Henry I. this important line of road had become almost impassable. The evil had, indeed, become so great, that King Henry found it necessary to interfere personally, and he caused the ground to be cleared, and built himself a mansion at Kingsbury with an inclosure of nine acres of land. This seems, however, to have proved but a partial check on the depredations of the robbers, and the king subsequently adopted a more effectual plan of protection against them, by establishing a town at the junction of the old roads. According to a practice which was then not uncommon among the feudal princes and barons of the Continent, Henry caused proclamation to be made throughout his kingdom, about the year 1115, that all men who would come to live in his new town should be allowed to purchase there land for building at the rate of twelve pennies an acre, and should enjoy as freemen of the town all liberties and immunities throughout all parts of England which the city of London or any other borough in the kingdom had enjoyed from old time. So people came together from all parts, and, taking the point of crossing as a centre, built their houses along the roads, so as eventually to form four streets branching from it. The town thus established was created by the king a free borough, and received the name of Dunstable.

For seventeen years and a half the new town went on flourishingly. The townsmen had assured to them their free rights as burghers, their free municipal government by twelve jurats, a market twice a week, an annual fair during the first three days of the month of August, and, not the least important privilege considering the origin of the borough, a free gallows (*liberas furcas*) for hanging thieves, at a place outside the town called Edescote. The king, as feudal or manorial lord, reserved to himself certain rights and royalties, and both Henry and his successors

appear to have held this town in great favour; for they not unfrequently visited it, and several rather celebrated tournaments were held in it. At the end of the period above named, however, King Henry appears to have had a sudden fit of piety, and perhaps out of love for the town (in which case it proved a mistaken sentiment) he resolved to build a monastic establishment at Dunstable. He accordingly founded a priory of canons regular, with a church dedicated to St. Peter, to which he gave all the rights he had previously reserved to himself in the town, with the lands he held there, excepting only his mansion at Kingsbury, because the conventual buildings were not then sufficiently large to receive the court when the king went to visit them. The king's charter to the townsmen had been, as was usual, expressed rather generally, and perhaps rather vaguely, and no doubt many of their rights were implied or held by custom. Their charter allowed them, in general terms, to hold rights which were held by other corporate towns; but as the canons also received from the king a general grant of his rights, plenty of room was left for dispute, of which the ecclesiastics never lost an opportunity of taking advantage, and they gradually usurped to a very considerable extent the rights of the townsmen.

The names of the two first priors of Dunstable are not known, but early in the reign of John, in the year 1202, the third prior, Thomas, became in some way or other incapable of performing his duties, for he was succeeded in the autumn of that year—though he did not die until 1205—by a young canon of Merton, named Richard de Morins. Richard must have been young, because he had only yet reached the grade of deacon; but he appears to have distinguished himself by some qualities—hardly pious ones—which had gained him the good opinion of King John, for we cannot doubt that it was to the king's favour he owed his promotion, when we find that he had no sooner taken possession of his new dignities than, at the beginning of the year 1203, he was sent by the king on a mission to Rome. The political character of this mission is revealed by the circumstance that, on Prior Richard's return towards the end of July, he brought with him a papal legate, who was instructed to labour for the establishment of peace between the kings of England and France, and who had been so entirely gained over to the interests of the former, that, when he was obliged to return without success, he laid an interdict upon France. There can be no doubt, indeed, that the profession for which Richard de Morins was best fitted was law rather than divinity; that he was a clever man of the world; and that he had two great objects constantly in view—the aggrandisement, at all risks, of the monastic establishment with which he was now identified, and the gratification of his own pride and vainglory. The evidence to his character has been left to us under his own hand, for no sooner had he become prior of Dunstable than he began two records which appear not to have existed in the priory before: one, a chartulary, or register of the charters and legal proceedings of the house; the other a chronicle; and the grand

object of both was to record the actions of Richard the Prior. They are his only literary works. Both begin with himself; but subsequent priors have continued them, or caused them to be continued, to a later period. The chronicle, it is true, professes to begin with the commencement of the Christian era; but the earlier part is a mere collection of notes of useful historical dates, and it is only when we come to the announcement that in the year 1202 Richard de Morins was "made" prior of Dunstable that we learn that it has any relation to that place. From that date it becomes little more than a record of Prior Richard's doings, of his labours for the interests of the priory, and, above all, of his continual lawsuits; for, with laymen or ecclesiastics, Prior Richard was always at law. It is from his own records of his own acts that we shall now proceed to show what were, in the middle ages, the relations between the inmates of a monastic house with the world out of doors; and it will be seen that they did not always consist in showing charity to people in the flesh, and praying gratuitously for the good of their souls.

It is clear from Prior Richard's own account that he was in favour at court. Immediately after his return from Rome, he obtained from the king a grant of lands and of a fair to be held in the month of May; and in the following year, 1204, King John gave to the priory the buildings and gardens of Kingsbury, which his predecessors had retained in their own hands. Many other gifts did Richard obtain for his priory from the crown and from individuals, and greatly did he increase its landed possessions and revenues. He appears to have acted a politic part during the troubles in which England was soon involved, so as to save his monastery from any serious injury. He went to Rome again to attend the Lateran Council in 1215, and on his way home he remained a whole year in Paris, attending the divinity schools. He was thus absent at the time of King John's death and the commencement of the new reign. Court favour seems now to have deserted Prior Richard, for during the reign of Henry III. he became involved in many troubles, and was less uniformly successful in his lawsuits. To some of these we will now call attention.

At the very commencement of his rule, we find Prior Richard in relations with the Jews, of what kind is not very clear, but he probably found them useful in his money affairs, and from the sequel there is reason for suspecting that his predecessor, Prior Thomas, had been an improvident ruler, and had left the priory in debt. By what must have been one of the earliest of his acts as prior, he gave licence to Fleming, the Jew of London, and his son Leo, with their families and servants, "to go, come, and dwell in the town of Dunstable, at their ease and peace, untroubled and honourably," and there "to pursue their lucre faithfully according to the custom of the Jews;" and he promised to maintain them in the town according to reason as though they were his own tenants. This licence was granted to them for their lives, and they were to pay for it annually two silver spoons, each weighing twelve pennies. The business these Jews followed was, just as in all modern times, that of pawnbrokers: they

lent money upon securities of all kinds; and apparently very soon after this licence was given, we find these two Jews, with others, engaged in a very curious affair of this description. To make this transaction better understood, it will be necessary to explain that among the various ways in which the monastic bodies obtained property, one was the sale of what were called *corrodies*. A corrody was simply a monk's allowance of provisions; and any individual who had sufficient of land or of money which he was willing to give to the religious house, might obtain for it an engagement to supply him daily during his whole life and wherever he might be dwelling with bread and drink and other provisions in the same quantity and quality as was supplied to the monks at their regular meals. It was equivalent to buying an annuity, with this difference, which was no doubt paid well for, that the holder obtained at the same time a share in the prayers of the monks and in the merits of their good actions—in fact, they undertook to feed him as long as he lived, and to send him to paradise when he died. Thus the individual who held a corrody gained thereby a place at the table of the monks, and was placed on the footing of a lay brother, and he was sometimes allowed to have lodgings also in the monastery. It was natural that the monks of the house had that kindly feeling towards the holders of *corrodies* to wish them the enjoyment of that part of what they had bargained for which was most to be desired for themselves and which cost the monastery least, and it was remarked that often the monks seemed more anxious to send their guest into paradise than to keep him long at their table, and that *corrodies* were not long lasting in this world. As it is evident that the value of the place in paradise could not easily be estimated in money, the monks do not appear to have fixed an exact price upon the *corrodies*, but obtained as much for them as they could. A man who had got an estate, small or large, saved himself the annual trouble of turning it to profit, by giving it to the monastery, and taking in return his place at the monks' table. Among other transactions of this kind, the prior of Dunstable had, during the time of which we have been speaking, granted a corrody in the priory to one William de Husborn, and William, being in want of money, had pawned this corrody to five Jews—Fleming and Leo above mentioned, and Bendin, Aaron, and Jacob—for the sum of seventy marks. As it was felt to be a scandal to the Church that such a document as a grant of a canon's corrody should be in the hands of unbelievers, Prior Richard interfered, and, with the advice of his diocesan, William de Blois, Bishop of Lincoln, he redeemed it, but he appears to have compelled the Jews to give it up for the comparatively small sum of thirteen marks. The corrody was considered as having been forfeited by the original holder, who relinquished his claim to it to the prior and convent by a formal deed, and they thereupon gave it to another individual who had advanced the thirteen marks for its redemption.

It was not because Prior Richard had any friendly feeling towards the Jews that he encouraged them to settle in Dunstable. On the contrary,

he seems to have indulged a saintly hatred towards them; and, while overlooking much more important occurrences, he carefully notes in his Chronicle any persecutions they underwent, in a way which shows that it was to him a subject of exultation. It appears, however, that the priory itself was rather deeply involved in debt, and Jews were probably troublesome to Prior Richard on this account, though he succeeded in keeping them quiet during the reign of John and the earlier years of that of Henry III. But in the year 1221, Moses, the son of Brun the Jew, commenced proceedings at law against the prior and convent to recover the large sum of seven hundred pounds, which he had lent them in the time of Prior Thomas. The cause was tried before the king's justices. We do not know whether, in the thirteenth century, a Jew was ever known to obtain justice against a Christian in an English court, but it is certain that in this case judgment was given rather summarily against the Jew, for the judges pronounced Prior Thomas's written acknowledgment to be a forgery,—alleging that, while that document was drawn up in the name of Thomas, the seal attached to it bore the name of Richard—that the deed had been “washed” (*lota*)—and that it contained false grammar. If bad grammar be a proof of forgery, we fear that it would go hard with a considerable number of mediæval documents, and suspicions of unfair play in another quarter might be raised by the curious discrepancy between the seal and the text. Perhaps the Jew was the victim in this transaction. At all events it proved a serious affair for Moses the son of Brun, for he was now transferred from the civil to the criminal side, and was only saved from the gallows by the devotion of his fellow Jews, who subscribed money to defend him, and gave the king a mark of gold to defer judgment, and then, after he had been more than a year in prison, and judgment could be deferred no longer, they gave a hundred pounds more to the king, and obtained the commutation of the sentence from hanging to banishment for life. So Moses abjured the country; and Prior Richard hardly conceals his grief and disappointment that he got off so easy, although he takes some consolation in placing on record the circumstance that, if Moses, son of Brun, escaped, one Jew was hanged that year, who had been convicted of the murder of his own wife. It would take more space than we can spare to enumerate all the law-suits of the priory recorded by Prior Richard, but it may be remarked that there are few of them which do not reveal some act of extortion or trespass committed by the prior against his neighbours.

Prior Richard was on no more peaceful terms with the neighbouring clergy than with the laity. He was frequently engaged in litigation with the prior of Woburn; and he took advantage of a convenient excuse for persecuting the parish priests, who still in England yielded only gradually and with great reluctance to the Romish principle of ecclesiastical celibacy. Many of these priests had female companions, who are not unfrequently called their wives, but who are more commonly described in Latin by the name of *focarie*, which may, perhaps, be translated by hearth-side

women, and these they refused to abandon. Ecclesiastical laws were frequently renewed, enjoining the priests to separate from their *focariae*, but with little effect, for those whose duty it was to enforce these laws seem in general to have had little inclination to interfere. Early in the time of Prior Richard of Dunstable, some of the "vicars" of parishes, belonging to the abbey of St. Albans and to the priory of Woburn, had given him offence, and, at his instance, a bull was addressed by Pope Innocent III. to the superiors of those two monastic houses requiring them to proceed against such vicars of theirs as were known publicly to keep in their houses women who are described in the papal document by epithets which are not very gallant, and who paid no attention to the admonitions which had been repeatedly addressed to them. Not long afterwards, about the year 1214, Robert, the parson, and William and Henry, the vicars, of Bradburn, had offended Prior Richard by their opposition to some designs he had upon that church. Prior Richard immediately sent a complaint to the Pope, setting forth that Robert, the parson, was the son of Godfrey, the parson, who had held the same church before him; that Henry was, in the same way, the son of the preceding vicar John; and that both imitated the incontinence of their fathers—that is, they had wives; while William, the vicar, kept a *focaria* publicly, as well as dogs for hunting. We might have given Prior Richard more credit for his zeal against clerical incontinence, if it had not so evidently been the result of a personal quarrel.

A new cause of discontent was given to the canons of Dunstable a few years after Prior Richard's death, when, in 1259, they were obliged, unwillingly, to let the Franciscans, or Friars Preachers, establish themselves in the town. Great jealousy continued to exist between these two religious establishments as long as we know anything of their history. It is recorded in the chronicle of the priory, that one day—it was in the year 1282—a certain woman of Dunstable was buried in the cemetery of the Friars Preachers, but for some reason, not explained, the corpse was carried first to the Priory Church, and there the mass was performed, and the oblation and eight wax tapers were given. The canon, who wrote this part of the chronicle, boasts that they only gave two tapers to the friars and two to the sisters—for the Franciscan establishment included monks and nuns—and that they kept "all the rest." In 1287, the canons learnt that the friars intended to enlarge their buildings, and the prior gave his porter money to buy, in his name, the house adjoining to the court of the friars, so that he might have the power of preventing them from enlarging their buildings!

But the most formidable antagonists of the prior and canons of Dunstable were the townsmen. There can be no doubt that, when Henry I. built and endowed the priory, he left the municipal rights of the townsmen not well protected; and there can be no doubt, also, that the prior and canons were continually trespassing upon them, while in ecclesiastical matters the people of Dunstable were entirely at the prior's mercy. Now, one of



the great subjects of dispute, between Prior Richard and the people of Dunstable, was the tithes. In the middle ages the Romish clergy tithed much more extensively than they have been accustomed to do in more recent times, for they took the tenths, not only of farming produce, but of people's earnings; and cases are known in which they extorted even from unfortunate women a tenth part of the wages of prostitution. Now, we learn from Prior Richard's own statements that he claimed from the inhabitants of Dunstable tithes of every individual, male or female, on all negotiations on this side of the sea or the other; so that if a Dunstable man went into France or Germany, and there, by a commercial or other transaction, gained money or goods, he was required on his return to Dunstable to give one-tenth of his gain to the Church. It may be supposed that it would be a difficult matter to ascertain the exact amount of tithe thus due from each individual, and to enforce the payment; but the clergy had their own means of meeting this difficulty, and, so long as people's minds were kept in ignorance, a very effectual one. The inhabitants were expected every Sunday to attend at high mass in the Priory Church, and, at the conclusion of the service, each individual was required to place on the altar the tenth part of his gains and earnings during the previous week. Those who chanced to be absent from home during one or more Sundays were to pay the whole arrears on the first Sunday after their return. If any one had defrauded the Church of any part of the tithes thus claimed, he was called upon to make it good at the following Lent, on pain of eternal damnation, for a general sentence of excommunication was then uttered against all defaulters. This tyranny met with little resistance in the rural districts: in fact, it was not so much felt there, inasmuch as there were few traders or manufacturers to tithe; but where the ecclesiastics came into relation with the free inhabitants of a town, and had the opportunity of exercising it there, it led to scenes of violent tumult. Such was the case in Dunstable.

During the earlier years of Prior Richard's government we hear of no great quarrel with the townsmen; perhaps they had been treated with tolerable indulgence, or, perhaps, they had not yet gathered the courage or resolution to resist. But in the year 1221 a violent dispute arose on this same question of tithes, and on other claims of the Church, such as the oblations at marriages, births, purifications, burials, &c.; and the question was settled by judgment of the archdeacon of Bedford, approved and confirmed by the Pope, which was therefore, as might be expected, all on the side of the prior. It was decided that the men of Dunstable should be tithed in the manner described above, and that there should be three separate excommunications at three different periods of the year against secret defaulters. It was ordered that "the old and good custom" should be observed in regard to oblations. The wording of this judgment, which is preserved in Prior Richard's register, required that people "should not in future give to the priest frivolous or derisory oblations, but money, or candles, or some other thing approved by the good custom

of the Church ;" but if any one happened to have no money, then he might give his ring or any similar object as a pledge to be redeemed. The burgesses were compelled to submit to this judgment, and the hostile parties were (outwardly) reconciled, and exchanged the kiss of peace.

Whatever discontent may have continued to exist after this settlement has not been recorded, but two years afterwards a tumult arose in the town from a different cause, though the feeling of irritation between laymen and clergy—town and gown—was probably no stranger to it. Among the endowments of Henry I., when he established the town, was a school, which he afterwards made over to the priory, and which became a rather celebrated place of learning in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The scholars, it may be supposed, would be likely to make common cause with the monks against the townsmen. In the spring or summer of the year 1223 there was a great fight between the scholars and the townsmen, in which many were wounded on both sides, and one of the latter died of the injuries he had received in the encounter. One of the party of the scholars, Robert the cleric of Sirinctone, whom the widow of the deceased accused of the slaughter, fled before he could be taken ; but there appear to have been no further proceedings, and the man who was then regent or master of the schools soon afterwards became a canon of the priory.

For several years, however the hostility between the townsmen may have shown itself in trifling quarrels, Prior Richard has not recorded them, but it appears that in 1227 the provostship (*præpositura*) of the town was, for some unexplained reason—perhaps in consequence of the death of the chief municipal officer during his year of office—in the hands of the prior, and then arose on the one side the attempt of the ecclesiastics to tyrannize over the townsmen, and on the other, the resolution of the townsmen to resist. The prior states the grounds of the dispute very briefly, but it appears from his own account that he sought to raise money by levying heavy amercements upon persons convicted of offences in the municipal court, whereas the townsmen asserted that the prior had no right to demand in any case more than four pennies ; that he had attempted to exercise an undue influence by introducing foreigners, that is, men not belonging to the town, as jurors, for the burgesses insisted against him that no foreigner could be placed on an inquest concerning any freeman of the town ; and that he had sought to enforce the judgments he had thus obtained in a violent and tyrannical manner, for they alleged further, that the prior had no right to distrain the goods or chattels of the burgesses in the public street within the town. There were also some other points of dispute, upon all which the burgesses proceeded at law against the prior, and the cause was brought before the justices itinerant in their circuit, but they found so many difficulties in it that they referred it to the Court of King's Bench. Meanwhile, a robber named Henry having fallen into the hands of justice, and accused four burgesses of Dunstable of complicity in his crime, these were indicted

before the county, where they pleaded that it was one of their franchises that no foreigner could interfere in the borough, and that they could only be tried in their own borough court. Thereupon both the prior and burgesses of Dunstable were cited before the Court of the King's Bench to show by what authority they claimed this right. They prior appeared in court, and pleaded that he had never claimed such a right—in fact, his own aggressive policy was in contradiction to it; but the townsmen seem to have acted obstinately and imprudently, and neglected to appear; in consequence of which four and twenty of the principal burgesses were arrested and committed to Bedford jail, where they were kept until they gave sufficient bond for their appearance on a certain day in the Court of King's Bench. There the only warrant they could show was old custom (it was the old custom of the town, unchartered municipal law, but intended to be allowed by the general terms of their charter, upon which the prior and his canons were deliberately trespassing); and the justiciary, the celebrated Hubert de Burgh, decided against them, and amerced them to the amount of twenty marks, "besides other private gifts which both he and others received from them." Corruption was at this time predominant, and the prior and canons purchased from the king (Henry III.) a confirmation of their charter with a new clause, which was sufficiently indefinite to give them a wide range for oppressing the burgesses. "We grant to the said prior and canons," said the king in this charter, "that they have and hold for ever the borough of Dunstable and the burgesses of the said town, as freely and fully, in all aids, amercements, suits, services, and customs, as we or our heirs should have or hold them if the aforesaid borough of Dunstable and the said burgesses were ours and in our hand;" and it was to be no obstacle to the prior and canons exercising any right they claimed, if they had never claimed or used that right before. For this very oppressive clause, the monks gave the king the then large sum of a hundred pounds, and they actually extorted from the burgesses an aid of a hundred marks towards the purchase-money of a document which was intended to be used in destroying their liberties. Moreover, the prior caused the rate appointed for this purpose to be collected by his own bailiffs. As might be expected, these met with considerable resistance, which led to some acts of violence, for many of the burgesses appear to have refused to pay the rate, and to have let the collectors distrain their goods. Thus the prior's bailiffs, John de Flitte and John de Cateby, seized the wheat of two of the burgesses, named Duc and Young, who resisted, and as they were immediately joined by others of their fellow-townsmen, the consequence was a sort of pitched battle, in which many were wounded on either side; but Prior Richard boasts that his servants gained the victory, and that they brought a cart half full of wheat into the court of the priory in spite of their adversaries. Actions for assault were brought on both sides, but when brought before the justices itinerant, they all fell to the ground.

It is evident from Prior Richard's own chronicle of these events that

he lost no time in taking advantage of the latitude given him by the new charter, and the burgesses, defeated for a time in their attempt to assert their civil rights, resolved to retaliate in ecclesiastical matters. According to the prior's account, ten of the burgesses conspired next year to deprive the Church of its oblations, and they resolved that in weddings, purifications, or funerals, "two persons only should follow the principal person." The prior excommunicated the ten burgesses, but the townsmen set the excommunication at defiance, and not only continued to hold communication with the excommunicated persons as before (which virtually subjected them all to the same sentence), but accompanied them into the church during divine service. Thereupon, both the prior and the parish priest closed their churches, and performed their services privately in the chapel of the infirmary during more than two months. Then the Bishop of Lincoln came to Dunstable with "a multitude" of his clergy, and, having ascended the pulpit of the priory church, solemnly excommunicated the ten burgesses who had begun the dispute, as well as all who held any communication with them, all who held back oblations of any kind, and all who should in future cause dispute or ill-feeling between the townsmen and the canons.

Such was the state of things toward the end of the year 1228. In the month of May of the year following, King Henry passed through Dunstable, and was lodged at the priory. This was an opportunity not to be overlooked by Prior Richard, who "humbly supplicated" his royal guest that he would take the priory under his especial care, and that he would interpose to restore peace between the canons and burgesses. The king accordingly, with the advice of Hubert de Burgh and others of his ministers, enjoined a certain form of pacification, to which the townsmen submitted as long as he was present, but which they rejected immediately after his departure. The burgesses were now, at the suit of the prior, summoned before the Court of King's Bench, where a more formal judgment was given, by which the prior was authorized, at whatever time the king taxed his burgesses, to tax the borough of Dunstable, "by his (the king's) special mandate." Some other points, such as the limitation of the prior's amercements to four pennies, were decided in favour of the burgesses. This judgment was embodied in a writ from the king to the sheriff of Bedfordshire, and Prior Richard was proceeding to act upon it immediately when he was met by a protest on the part of the burgesses that by the terms of the writ he had no right to tax them at any time without the king's "special mandate." The prior had to give more money to obtain a new writ from the king to relieve him from this difficulty, but the burgesses also sought the king and obtained a writ, which limited the right of taxation on the part of the prior to such of the townsmen only as were his tenants in chief. Prior Richard found himself to a certain degree outwitted, and, yielding to circumstances, he accepted this limitation, and appointed twelve of what he calls "the more faithful of the burgesses," who took an oath to assess the tax "reasonably,"

not acting unfavourably to their opponents, or favouring their friends. Prior Richard appears to have reckoned upon a large sum of money from this tax, and he was very indignant, and accused the assessors of "manifest perjury," when they fixed the whole amount of the rate at no more than sixty-three shillings, and rated the richest of the inhabitants at only three shillings. New hostilities arose, in which, says the prior, "the fury of the people became so great, that out of hatred to the Church they withdrew both tithes and oblations." Prior Richard now complains that the townsmen uttered "blasphemies" and threats against the canons and their servants, and that they laid false crimes to their charge which caused them to be defamed "throughout all England." They attacked these ecclesiastics in their worldly interests in a still more sensitive quarter. They went into the church, and there publicly proclaimed that no burgess should take his corn to grind at the prior's mill, thus depriving the priory of a large source of income. They destroyed the wheat which the prior had sown on what had formerly been common land. In all these acts of resistance and retaliation, the townsmen appear to have been backed by the bailiffs of the great landholders in the neighbourhood, who had, no doubt, all their particular grievances against the priory, but who are accused by the prior of having been corrupted by bribes. It happened that in the midst of these commotions the king's chancellor and the chief justice, Stephen de Segrave, passed through Dunstable, and the prior says that they "seemed" to be angry, and threatened the burgesses, but after their departure matters went no better: when the sheriff proceeded to distrain those who had been rated and had not paid, the whole population of the town, man, woman, and child, rose and drove the sheriff's officers away. The prior then again called in the assistance of the Bishop of Lincoln, who ordered the townsmen to be publicly excommunicated in all the burghs and deaneries around; but the burgesses of Dunstable had by this time been so goaded into resistance, that they said aloud that they were excommunicated already and cared nothing for it, for they had resolved "to descend into hell all together," rather than submit to the prior's claim to the right of arbitrary taxation. It was, indeed, an insupportable tyranny, when the prior, in addition to many other ways of extorting money from the people of Dunstable, claimed, in his ecclesiastical capacity, one-tenth of all their gains, and also, as their lay sovereign, the right of taxing them at will; and the burgesses were only fighting the same battle which the people of England had at a subsequent period to fight against the pretensions of the crown. The burgesses now evidently acted with great resolution and with well-considered policy, and they entered into negotiation with a secular baron, William de Cantilupe, for forty acres of his land in the neighbourhood of the town, intending, if the struggle was continued and threatened to go against them, to remove thither and live under tents, where they would be no longer liable to the prior for either tax or toll; and Prior Richard complains that both civil and ecclesiastical courts had become so weary of

his appeals that they would no longer interfere. "At this moment," he says, "God visited the spirit of Master John, Archdeacon of Bedford," and the prior, baffled in all his attempts to conquer the townsmen, was very glad to submit to his friendly arbitration. The decision was decidedly in favour of the burgesses, for, by a "final concord," duly drawn up in the king's court at Westminster, at the end of June, 1229, they having pleaded that by their old liberties and customs they owed no tax or aid to the prior, that he had no right to take more than four pennies for an amercement in any case, and that they were not liable to him in any of the other customs and services which he had sought to exact from them, Prior Richard absolutely abandoned all these claims, requiring only that amends should be made for the damages which he and the priory had sustained during this protracted dispute. For these concessions, the burgesses gave the prior sixty pounds sterling, and promised to allow all the rights and customs which the priory had held previously to this attempt at arbitrary taxation. It was further agreed that, in case of future quarrels, all questions should be referred to the Court of King's Bench, before any act of violence had been on either side.

Thus ended this great quarrel. The burgesses and the ecclesiastics exchanged the kiss of peace, the excommunications were withdrawn, and we hear of no more disputes of any importance between the town and the priory during the life of Prior Richard. He had received a lesson which was not easily to be forgotten. Richard de Morins died on the 9th of April, 1242, after presiding over the canons of Dunstable nearly forty years. He was evidently a skilful, and, at the same time, a thrifty ruler; and, in spite of the costs of his innumerable lawsuits, he contrived to increase greatly the property of the priory. In his Chronicle he has carefully recorded every new bit of land, every increase of ecclesiastical patronage or power, every tax or fine, in fact, every temporal advantage of whatever description which he had gained for himself or for his monks; but he has not handed down to posterity the memory of a single act of piety or charity, nor do his annals contain the record of any one circumstance that could lead us to suppose that they related to a body incorporated for religious purposes. All these circumstances we ought, perhaps, to ascribe as much to the principle of the institution to which he belonged as to his personal character; and it is certain that, as we run over the pages of his continuators, we find that his successors in office were equally overbearing and selfish, that they were almost as often engaged in lawsuits, and that they laboured as much to oppress the townsmen as Prior Richard de Morins.

## Our Survey of Literature and Science.



WINTER has come :

The wind is his whip,  
One choppy finger is laid on his lip.

For the sake of all, but, above all, for the sake of the poor, let us hope it may not be severe. To those rich enough for Literature, the prospect is not so drear. What if without there be a wash of rain, a curtain of fog, a carpet of snow (coldly beautiful on trees and high-roads, dirty and unpoetical in streets of towns), and a swirling of bitter wind; what if the fallen leaves are trodden into the mud, suggesting pensive thoughts

of the fast lapsing years, suggesting with their yellow our grey; what if this and more be seen without? within there may be cheeriness and active thought. *Labuntur anni*; but love and hope endure for ever. The flowers are gone, alas; but books are come. Draw the curtains, and stir the fire. Books are the flowers of winter. They, too, charm the eye,





kindle the imagination, unseal the fountains of hidden suggestion, awaken the activities of thought. Publishers are not "frozen out gardeners." Winter is their summer, and they are said to irrigate from Pactolus (but *that* perhaps is a fable). Their flowers are not all beautiful; but the garden-plot (the Row) is varied, and you choose where you will. Sometimes an unsuspected thorn pricks to anger; sometimes an odour, stronger, but not sweeter, than that of the rose, excites repugnance. What thorns, what odour, will be felt in Bishop Colenso's book, which "everybody" is handling and sniffing, it is not for us to say. We pass it by. Here is something more in our way: *Shakspeare's Songs and Sonnets, Illustrated by John Gilbert*; from which, by the publisher's courtesy, we have taken the glimpses of winter on the preceding page. Are they not delightfully wintry? How cold and drear! How the wind whistles through those leafless branches, and the shepherd's cloak! The very dog is cold, in spite of his fur. But there is companionship; and by the faggot which the boy carries home imagination warms itself.

Among gift-books this deserves special mention. The task of illustrating Shakspeare is not a grateful task, for every reader has already formed pictures in his own mind, and cannot consent to accept the pictures of another. Ariel, for instance, is an impossible subject. Nor do we think Mr. Gilbert has been happily inspired in his treatment of it. Puck is, perhaps, more manageable, and Mr. Gilbert's image of the quaint little imp is as good as we have seen.



Some of the illustrations are very good, but others are precisely what Shakspeare is not—commonplace, conventional, unimaginative. The getting up of the book is irreproachable.

For a dainty book to lie upon the drawing-room table, what can surpass the *Early English Poems*? Here, indeed, Pactolus has been

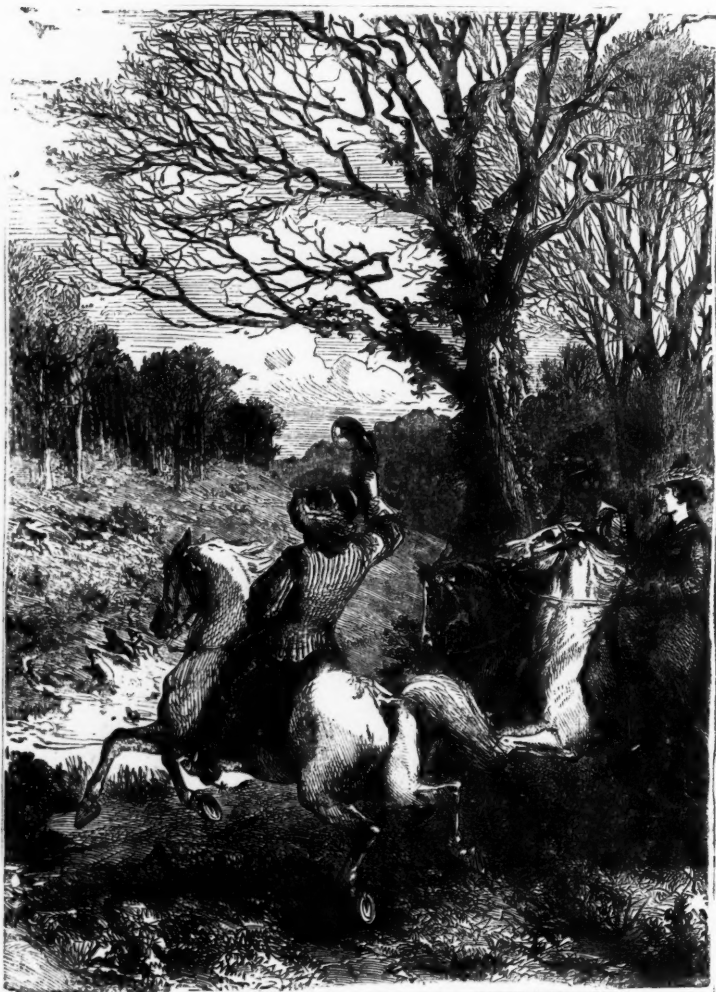
employed in irrigation, and has flowed over the very binding in golden waves; the cost of producing such a volume must have been considerable. But it is not wholly, nor even chiefly, by external splendour that the book claims a place among the ornaments of a table. Art allures us under the form of poems, designs, and woodcuts to feast the eye and mind. Last year the same publishers issued a volume of *Favourite English Poems from Thomson to Tennyson*, which included the most various styles, from Gray's Elegy to Burns' Cotter's Saturday Night, from the Deserted Village to John Gilpin, from the Eve of St. Agnes to the Battle of Blenheim, from the Ancient Mariner to the Lay of the Last Minstrel, from the Farmer's Boy to the Ode to a Skylark, from Poor Jack to the May Queen: poems to be read at any time and always turned over with the pleasure of remembered zest. These were illustrated by more than two hundred engravings from designs by Creswick, Webster, Horsley, Birket Foster, Wehnert, George Thomas, Harrison Weir, Cope, Tayler, Townsend, Duncan, E. V. B., and others, presenting a variety of styles not less interesting than the variety of the poems. They were not all good, and some of the figures were open to stringent criticism; but they were all remarkable specimens of book-illustration, and some of the landscapes were perfectly ravishing. The success must have been great, or the publishers would not have ventured to repeat the experiment this year, by a companion volume on the *Early English Poems*. The purchasers of the first volume will hardly abstain from adding this one to it; for with similar attractions in externals, there is a further, or let us say, a different order of attraction, in the fact that the poems are less familiar; and many a reader who would hesitate before attacking Chaucer's poems in an edition of Chaucer, will be beguiled into reading the admirable prologue to the Canterbury Tales in this seductive form. The illustrations will allure him into reading a few lines in order to understand them; and, having made this beginning, he will find that Chaucer is very intelligible, when the few obsolete words are explained as they are in the foot-notes. Spenser, Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, Greene, Marlow, Harrington, Raleigh, Bamfield, Daniel, Drayton, Denham, Sedley, Pomfret, Roscommon, and others, may then become something more than empty names to many. The pictures which form the primary attraction of such works are of various merit. Here, as elsewhere, the figures are the least successful, probably because within the limits of engraving it is so much more difficult to portray the human face divine, than the face of nature. The infinite varieties of mood and character are less easily fixed by lines of black and white, than the, to us, less varied aspects of streams, uplands, mountains, and forests. The inevitable suggestion of lines leads the mind away to other types than those the artist has endeavoured to present; an irregularity on the bark of a tree or the slope of a hill suggests nothing but one of the thousand irregularities with which the eye is familiar; but in the face or form of a human being this irregularity may suggest a vulgarity, or a mood totally unlike that which the artist wishes to convey. Thus the

artist has not only to contend with the difficulty of portraying the human face and form in all the subtle varieties of emotion—which difficulty becomes all the greater from our greater familiarity with the details of individual life than with the details of inanimate nature—but he has the further difficulty that every line and shadow inevitably suggests some detail to the mind, and this suggestion may be wholly misleading. A rivulet, or an avenue of trees, may be very unfaithfully represented, and we may recognise its want of truth, but its suggestions will generally be that of rivulets or avenues; whereas a group of peasants may by some infelicity of detail suggest the stage, and thus wear an air of unreality; or the drawing-room, and thus wear an air of artificiality; or the streets, and thus wear an air of vulgarity.



Making all due allowances we must still say that it is the landscapes, and the pictures in which landscape predominates, that the illustrations achieve the highest success. And these are fortunately the most numerous. As a specimen, not the best, but one suited to our purpose, consider the above illustration of Sir Philip Sidney's "With how sad steps, O moon!"

All the suggestions here are poetical. The mind wanders through the distant misty valleys, or pauses beside the moonlit stream. Broken memories of other scenes and other times vaguely rise before us ; thoughts may be led away by such a picture, but cannot be misled into vulgarities



or unrealities. Then again with the scene above : the figures are in such subordination to the landscape as to aid in the general effect by their suggestions. We cannot borrow more from this beautiful book, but heartily recommend it to the attention of rich and gift-making readers.

*The Pictures of English Landscape*, by Birket Foster, with Poems by Tom Taylor, is an exquisite volume, which makes us happy whenever we turn over its leaves, carrying the mind into the peaceful lanes, beside the gurgling streams, and up to the doors of picturesque cottages, and thus recalling the happy visions of past experience. Here we see the reapers at work, the donkeys browsing in peace, the children on the stile, the horse at the smithy door, the cattle in the farmyard, the haymakers under the summer's sun, the cattle cooling themselves in the water, and children crossing a brook over stepping-stones, all touched with grace and felicitous truth, rivalling Collins and Gainsborough in picturesqueness, and showing the marvellous advance of the art of wood-engraving. It is superfluous to speak of Birket Foster's rare power of depicting English landscape. We may complain of a little monotony in the perpetual recurrence of certain forms; but every artist has his mannerisms, and Birket Foster has so much truth and poetry that much is to be forgiven. He seems to be strongly impressed with the idea of Novalis, that "water is the eye of a landscape," and will not have a landscape without this eye; but it may be well to call his attention to the iteration of his treatment of this water, which in almost every picture forms a bit of the foreground. We regret that the size of these illustrations is too large for us to borrow a specimen for our pages; let us therefore turn to

*The New Forest: its History and Scenery*, by John R. Wise, illustrated by Walter Crane, which will furnish a picture or two from its stores. This book is like Wordsworth's *Greece*, a work of erudition, as well as a work of art. It must be read no less than looked at; for although the beauty of its illustrations and getting up claim for it a place on the drawing-room table, the nature of its contents claims for it a place in the carpet-bag of a traveller or on the shelves of a student. In many respects it serves as an excellent guide-book to those whom it will incite to explore the region of the New Forest; and from its hints we may at once extract the following, as useful in general:—"The stories with which most books on the Forest abound, of persons being swamped in morasses, are much exaggerated. Mind only this simple rule—wherever you see the white cotton-grass growing, and the bog-moss particularly fine and green, avoid that place." Mr. Wise complains that travellers rush over the Continent, and neglect this lovely region, which affords so good an example of English scenery and its connection with our history. "It remains after some eight hundred years still the New Forest. True, its boundaries are smaller, but the main features are the same as on the day when first afforested by the Conqueror. The names of its woods and streams and plains are the same. It is almost the last, too, of the old forests with which England was formerly so densely clothed. Charnwood is now without its trees; Wychwood is enclosed; the great forest of Arden—Shakspeare's Arden—is no more; and Sherwood is only known by the fame of Robin Hood: but the New Forest still stands, full of the old associations with and memories of the past." Into this the book allures us by pen and pencil. See a specimen on the next page.

Mr. Wise detects traces of the Celt in the people of this region. "Heartiness and roughness still go hand in hand with him as with his forefathers. But a heaviness of intellect is always visible, and sadness oppresses his mirth. His dress to this day bespeaks his nationality. He



The New Forest from Bramble Hill.

still wears what is locally called the 'smicket' and sometimes the 'surplice,' the old English *smóc*, called also the *tunece*. It is still, too, as formerly, tied round the waist with a leathern band. His legs are still cased, as we see in the old English drawings, with gaiters known as 'vam-





View in Frame Wood, near Brockenhurst.



The Cattle Ford, Liney Hill Wood, near Lyndhurst.



plets' or 'strog's.' He says "plock" instead of "block," "mulloch" for dirt, "more" (*mawr*) for root, and "bowerstone" for boundary. He has a peculiar drawl, says "pearls" for parts, "stwone" for stone, "twereable" for terrible, "measter" (*mæster*) for master, and substitutes *a* for *o*, as "lard" for lord, "nat" for not, "amang" for among, "shart" for short. On these and numerous other details philological and historical we must refer to the volume itself, which has been a labour of love to the author.

A word respecting the artist. The reader will probably be surprised, as we were, on learning that these exquisitely characteristic bits of foliage and forest life are the productions of a youth of seventeen. Those who examine the illustrations in the volume itself will prophesy that Mr. Walter Crane cannot long remain unknown; indeed, even the more imperfect copies we have given of three of these scenes will suffice to show the fine artistic instinct and the delicate sensibility to form which his drawings display.

Next month we may have a word to say about the books for children. Our attention is now claimed by Mrs. Gordon's *Life of Christopher North*, with which many circles will be busy, for the Professor was immensely popular in Scotland, and was a figure of some mark and interest in England. If on this side of the Tweed he is not so highly prized, he is quite as much loved; and his "Life," if not remarkable, has two salient points of interest—Wilson and the man, and Literature at the beginning of this century. As a man, those who never knew him personally will learn from these volumes to estimate his qualities. Here is proof that his exuberant, reckless style was the riot of genuine animalism; his extravagance and enthusiasm were the outbursts of real not feigned animal spirits. He had a powerful frame, and a tender poetic soul. Poetry and muscularity were united in him, and gave a geniality to fierce aggressiveness, a generosity to virulence, which is perfectly intelligible, and not inexcusable when known to be no literary masquerade. There was something lion-like in his play; and, as is the case with lions, play easily passed into a ferocity which mangled. He was, however, singularly free from malevolence even towards his enemies; and if his prejudices often made his attacks unjustifiable, he gained a general pardon because it was felt that he sinned without malice. It was a loving and lovable nature; with many flecks and stains upon its rind there was no speck of rottenness at the core. His writing was sincere even in its hyperboles. His life was upright, and sanctified by an enduring affection. No one can mistake the tenderness in his writings; it was in his life. He knew the blessedness of married love; when that was taken from him the best of life was gone. He survived it seventeen years, but never survived the memory of what it had been to him.

On the second salient point in this book we must speak less admiringly. "It is impossible," Mrs. Gordon writes, "for us at this time to realize fully the state of feeling that prevailed in the literature and politics of

the years between 1810 and 1830. We can hardly imagine why men who at heart respected and liked each other [query] should have found it necessary to hold no communion, but, on the contrary, to wage bitter war, because the one was an admirer of the Prince Regent and Lord Castlereagh, the other a supporter of Queen Caroline and Mr. Brougham. We cannot conceive why a poet should be stigmatized as a base and detestable character, merely because he was a Cockney and a Radical; nor can we comprehend how gentlemen, aggrieved by articles in newspapers and magazines, should have thought it necessary to the vindication of their honour to horsewhip or shoot the printers or editors of the publications. Yet in 1817 and the following years such was the state of things in the capital of Scotland. . . . You were either a Tory and a good man, or a Whig and a rascal, and *vice versa*. If you were a Tory and wanted a place, it was the duty of all good Tories to stand by you; if you were a Whig your chance was small; but its feebleness was all the more a reason why you should be proclaimed a martyr, and all your opponents profligate mercenaries."

This is not only a mild statement of the spirit in which the *Quarterly*, *Blackwood*, *Fraser*, and the *John Bull* were conducted, but it implies that the Liberal organs were conducted with similar virulence; which we believe to be altogether a misstatement. The *Edinburgh Review* and the *Examiner* assaulted its enemies with an asperity which would not be permitted now. They employed ridicule and bitterness; but surely it cannot be said that they approached the Tory organs in grossness of personality? Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt never spoke of their adversaries as their adversaries were in the habit of speaking of them. Indeed the wicked unscrupulousness of the Tory organs in those days was such that the very men themselves lived to be heartily ashamed of. It belonged not only to the virulence of party feeling, but to the want of literary morality. We should probably see similar virulence if similar political agitation now disturbed our peace; but should we see similar indecency? Have we not a higher morality in literature? That we have still much to learn in this respect is unhappily true. The Press, in becoming more extensive and powerful, has necessarily included a greater number of heterogeneous elements; in becoming a profession it has, like other professions, lured many "black sheep" into the fold. But if there is still considerable laxity and some positive dishonesty, if there still exists an unacknowledged feeling that the written word carries with it no responsibility—that a written lie is not so degrading as a spoken lie—there is, nevertheless, a much higher standard in the higher ranks of the press. We should be surprised, for instance, if the tone of the letters in the *Life of Christopher North* was to be found in the letters of our contemporaries of equal standing. What are we to think of a man like Lockhart writing to Wilson, "Pray write a first-rate but brief puff of *Mathew* (Lockhart's own novel) for next number of *Blackwood*, or, if not, say so, that I may do it myself, or make the Dr." What are we to say

to his accepting Stoddart's offer to supply the *New Times*, on condition of receiving a few paragraphs, and proposing the same to Wilson. "It is a pleasant thing to have a daily paper at one's breakfast-table all the year through. It can cost us little trouble to repay him by a dozen half-columns—half of these may be puffs of ourselves, by the way—and Southey and others have agreed to do the same." If such a man in our day were not ashamed to write puffs of himself, he would at least be ashamed of its being known, and would not exhibit such cynicism.

Miss Kavanagh has produced a perfectly pleasant book about *English Women of Letters*, as a companion to her *French Women of Letters*. It is not quite in accordance with her title that she only includes novelists among her women of letters; but this is a slight matter. What she has given are biographical sketches of Mrs. Aphra Behn, Miss Fielding, Miss Burney, Mrs. Charlotte Smith, Mrs. Radcliffe, Mrs. Inchbold, Miss Edgeworth, Miss Austen, Mrs. Opie and Lady Morgan. To each of these biographies is affixed a critical account of the writer's works, and this account is written with nice discrimination and with no exaggerated eulogies. One makes a sort of pleasant bowing acquaintance with the several women, which may lead to intimacy hereafter.

Although there is nothing new, nor indeed is there any pretence of novelty, in *Our Last Years in India*, by Mrs. John Speid, there are many pleasant pages of description, and an account of the religions of India, which will be read in this accessible form by many who would shrink from opening the serious volumes whence she has drawn her materials. A quiet play of humour, never degenerating into "comic writing," and a keen observant eye for external characteristics, make this volume acceptable.

The natural history of the sea has received no more important or attractive contribution than in Dr. Wallich's *North Atlantic Sea Bed*, the first part of which has just appeared. It comprises a diary kept on board the "*Bull Dog*, in 1860," with chapters of observations on the presence of animal life, and the formation of organic deposits at great depths. It is well written, with a stern suppression of superfluous matter; and it sets beyond a doubt a point which ought never to have been raised into a doubt, had biologists been more familiar with physics—namely, the existence of animal life at enormous depths in spite of the enormous pressure. The vastness of this pressure is easily estimated. At the depth of a mile below the surface it amounts to 160 of our atmospheres, or 2,640 lbs. on every square inch; at 4,000 fathoms ( $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles) it amounts to 750 atmospheres, under which pressure water would be compressed into about a fifth less than its original volume. How, it is asked, can delicate organisms, how can any known organism, resist such pressure? Dr. Wallich's researches triumphantly prove that delicate organisms *do* resist this pressure; and that the ocean-bed is almost as densely populated at great depths as at moderate depths. He has brought up animals alive from a depth of a mile and a half, and there is no valid reason to be

adduced against the expectation of finding animals at any depth ; at least no such reason can be deduced from the fact of pressure. Those who argue on the supposed effects of pressure seem to forget the *fact* that an average sized man has to support a pressure of nearly 15 tons ( $14\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. on every square inch), and they forget the reason why he supports it without any consciousness, namely, that the pressure is equal in all directions ; so that, although it is perfectly true that a man could not support the pressure of many atmospheres if suddenly plunged under them, he could support them as well as he supports one, if sufficient gradations prevented any sudden disturbance of the equilibrium between the fluids and gases within his body and those without. For the same reason, man can, and does live perfectly well under a pressure only half that of our atmosphere at the sea-level, on the high mountain ranges of tropical Asia ; but a sudden diminution of half our atmospheric pressure would be fatal, by the disturbance of the equilibrium between external and internal pressure. "In the case of pieces of wood, and meat, and corked bottles containing air," says Dr. Wallich, "which have been sent down to great depths in order to demonstrate the effects of pressure, it is evident that precisely those conditions are present which are never to be met with in creatures constituted to live under it. In short, they prove too much ; for they prove clearly, that in defiance of all obstacles, a state of equilibrium is rapidly engendered between the interior and exterior of the wood, mutton, and the bottles, and that whenever this takes place no further change is experienced." If suddenly submerged, that is to say, before the pressure has time to overcome the resistance of the cellular and fibrous tissues, diminution of bulk must result ; but not if the submergence be gradual. Indeed, were the operation of pressure such as is assumed by the biologists who deny the possibility of life at great depths, the ocean bed would not be loose sand, mud, and shells, but hard rock ; and the deep-sea sounding apparatus, once let down many fathoms, could never be hauled up again.

Dr. Wallich calls attention to another curious fact. It is sufficiently established that animals can, and plants cannot exist without light ; and at a certain depth light wholly disappears. Temperature, again, has considerable influence on life : "when, however, we estimate its effects on the distribution of animals and plants in the ocean, we find them to be extremely unequal ; for whereas marine organisms are now known to exist at a depth of at least 15,000 feet, no vegetable structures have been met with in a living state lower than 2,400 feet." We had intended drawing more copiously from this interesting work, but our space terminates here.

#### SCIENCE.

*On the Existence of Muscles in Plants.*—The recent discovery, by Ferdinand Cohn, of a contractile tissue in plants identical in properties with the muscular tissue of animals, adds one more striking fact to the accumulated evidence of identity between the vegetal and animal organi-

zations. Well-informed biologists have for some time past been agreed on the impossibility of drawing any absolute lines of demarcation between the two. Instead of the marked opposition which may still be read in popular handbooks, thrown into the form of tabulated contrasts, we have learned that the physical, chemical, and physiological characters, by which the plant and animal were supposed to be separated, are unequivocally characteristic of both. It is impossible to deny that plants have motility, and some of them even locomotion. If we deny them sensibility, it is on grounds which will equally exclude many classes of animals; and these grounds are anatomical. It is because we fail to detect the *mechanism* of sensibility that we endeavour to interpret the phenomena as physical. It is because we associate sensibility and contractility with peculiar nervous and muscular structures that we deny that certain phenomena observed in plants are what we should consider them to be if we could discover nerves and muscles. Take the case of the sensitive plant *Dionaea Muscipula*, or Fly-trap. The edges of its leaf are fringed with hairs, like an eyelid. On the inside of the leaf six delicate hairs are arranged in such an order that it would be difficult for an insect to traverse the leaf without touching one of these hairs. No sooner is a hair touched than the two sides of the leaf suddenly close; just as the two eyelids close when an insect, or bit of dust, touches the sensitive surface. The leaf entraps the insect—the fringe of hairs on the edges interlacing like fingers of opposite hands. If the insect be not speedily liberated, it is soon *digested*; as it would be in the stomach of an animal. It should be borne in mind that this “sensitiveness” is not the property of the whole leaf, but is localized in the delicate hairs of the centre, precisely as sensitiveness is localized in the nervous mechanism of animals. Now, comparing the *phenomena* observed in the plant with phenomena observed in animals, it seems impossible to discern any marked distinction; if the eyelid closing on an insect proves sensibility—if the arms of a polype closing on an insect proves sensibility—then the closing of the *Dionaea* proves it. But the *mechanism* in the three cases is different. In the eyelid we find nerves and muscles; in the polype we find muscles, and no nerves; in the plant, neither nerves nor muscles.

This difficulty may be turned by considering all three cases as cases of *contractility* only, and the first as contractility *stimulated* by sensibility. If this view were adopted, we should have to cut off many classes of animals from the possession of sensibility, and by so doing bring them into still closer connection with plants. But then arises the question: Whence the contractility of plants? It is here that Cohn's admirable memoir\* throws a flood of light. He has discovered that in at least one portion of a plant—the stamen of the *Centaurea*—there exists a tissue which presides over the phenomena of contractility; and he naturally infers that in all other supposed cases of plant-contractility a similar tissue will be present.

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\* F. COHN: *Contractile Gewebe im Pflanzenreiche*. Breslau, 1862.

We cannot pretend here to condense the numerous observations and rigorously-conducted experiments by which he establishes his results. Curious readers must consult the original. We give the results. The stamen of *Centaurea* is excited by the mechanical, chemical, and electrical stimuli which excite muscles; when excited, it contracts in the same way as a muscle, describing the same curve, when, after reaching its maximum, it begins to relax again. Like the muscle, it becomes tired by contraction, and recovers its exhausted force only by repose. Like a muscle, it is excited by a weak galvanic current, and rendered tetanic by a strong current. Like a muscle, it exhibits three properties—first, that of being excited by stimuli; secondly, that of *changing its form* on being excited; thirdly, that of *transmitting* every stimulus—under its correlate as motor-force—to neighbouring parts.

The importance of this discovery will not be overlooked. If, as one can only infer, the phenomena observed in other plants should be found equally reducible to a similar tissue of contractile cells, we shall have a beautiful explanation of many biological phenomena now very obscure. The reader will remark that we have, throughout, for certain purposes of our own, spoken of the "muscular tissue," where Cohn uses the term "contractile tissue." It is time to remove any misconception which might arise from this use of the term. By muscular tissue must not be understood the special organs named "muscles" in animals, which are formed of muscular tissue *and* several other tissues. Nor even must it be understood as indicating a tissue of muscular fibres, such as we find in the higher animals; but simply a tissue of contractile cells. It will prevent any misconception if we remember that what are called muscles or muscular tissue in the simpler animals are nothing but contractile cells; and a diagram of the muscles in a fresh-water polype would differ very little from a diagram of a cellular tissue in plants.

*The Velocity of Light.*—In our last number we communicated a discovery by M. Leon Foucault on the velocity of light, and his deduction therefrom, that the distance of the sun from the earth is diminished by one-thirtieth. M. Babinet, in a recent communication to the academy, considered this "precise determination of the sun's distance as a great event in science." A writer of the highest authority has forwarded to us his doubts on the point, observing, "that the amount of the sun's parallax, and the measure of its distance (*i. e.* the length in miles of the lineal unit of the scale on which the dimensions of our system are reckoned), are, at all events, only partially affected by the increased velocity assigned by M. Leon Foucault for light. The actually received value of the sun's distance (and of course his parallax) is concluded from the *measured diameter* of the earth, combined with observations of the transit of Venus and is entirely independent of any estimate of the velocity of light. It is true that velocity may be, and has been, deduced from our knowledge of this distance, combined with observations (necessarily unsusceptible of extreme precision) of the eclipses of Jupiter's

satellites, and it has also been deduced from the co-efficient of aberration (another element of very delicate determination) combined with the earth's *known* velocity in its orbit. M. Foucault's experiments afford a third, a direct and *possibly* a more exact, evaluation, and the *mean of all the three* will in all probability be found very near the truth. In that case, no doubt, the received distance of the sun *will* have to be in some degree reduced, in conformity with, though not to the full extent of, the reduced result derived from working back through the medium of aberration, from M. Foucault's velocity of light : since not only would it be unfair to reject altogether the result of the transit of Venus, but the co-efficient of aberration itself must be allowed some liability to error.

M. Babinet affirms that M. Foucault's method of calculation is more direct and precise. "We will preserve the word parallax," he says, "although on this method there is no need of any measure of angles, and the distance of the sun is thus directly determined. M. Foucault measures the velocity of light ; astronomy, by a measure of aberration, tells us that the mean velocity of the earth round the sun is one ten thousandth that of light. If we take the ten thousandth part of the number assigned to the velocity of light, we have the velocity of the earth, that is to say, the path it travels in a second of time. Multiplying this number of yards by the number of seconds in the sidereal year, we obtain the circumference of the annual circle of the earth. Dividing by the known relation of circumference to the diameter, we have the actual diameter of the annual orbit of the earth, half of which is the distance of the earth from the sun."

*Alloy of Platinum and Iridium.*—Russia is the only country, we believe, in which a coinage of platina has ever been in circulation, and there only in small quantity and for a brief period of issue. With a view, perhaps, to the revival of this medium, with the facilities afforded for the purpose by the powerful processes of M. St. Claire Deville for the fusion of platinum, M. Jacobi has been charged by the Russian Government to examine, in conjunction with Messrs. Deville and Debray, the physical properties of platinum prepared by the simple fusion of the native metal without previous separation of the iridium and rhodium. The result, as reported by M. Jacobi, is, that an alloy of platinum and iridium, with a little rhodium, is thus readily obtained on a large scale, and that when so produced it is superior to pure platinum, both in density and elasticity, and quite as malleable. An artificial alloy of eighty per cent. pure platinum and twenty iridium fused together is perfectly ductile and malleable, *and nearly insoluble in nitromuriatic acid*, a property likely to render it extremely useful in the chemical arts.



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